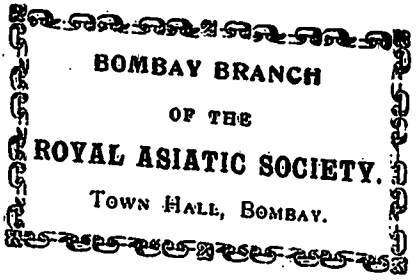
00086127



Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 10 March, 2016

3-1-18

BELGIUM.

VOL. I.

3.h.18

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

IN THE PRESS, IN 2 VOLS. POST 8VO. WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

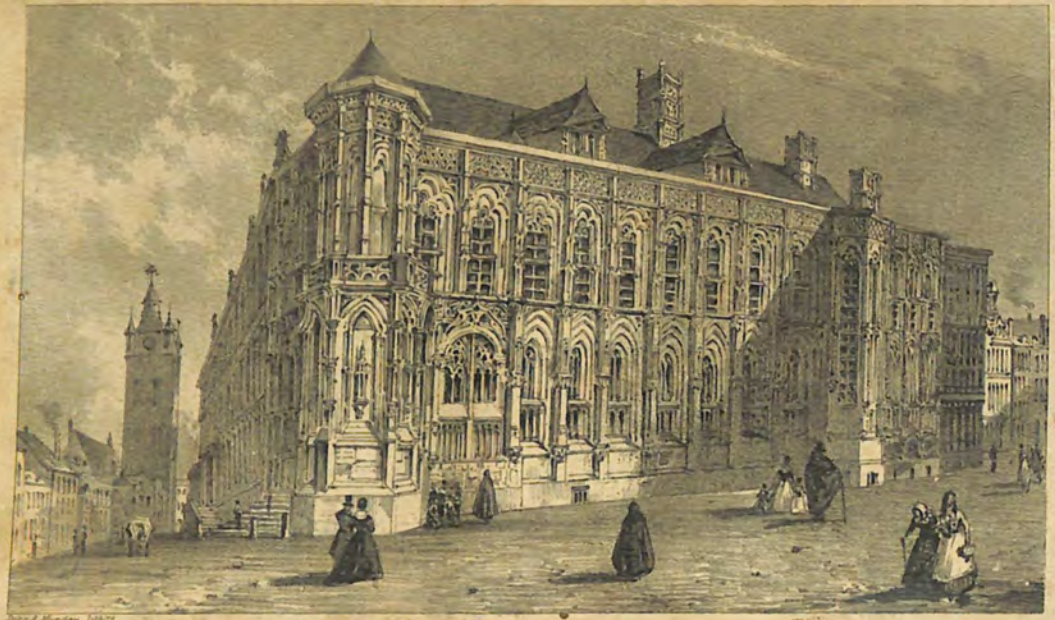
THE STATES OF

THE PRUSSIAN LEAGUE.

BY

J. EMERSON TENNENT, ESQ. M.P.

AUTHOR OF "BELGIUM," "THE HISTORY OF MODERN GREECE," &c.



TOWN HALL, GHENT.

Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY LIBRARY

BELGIUM.

86127
ac

BY

J. EMERSON TENNENT, ESQ., M.P.

AUTHOR OF "LETTERS FROM THE ÆGEAN," AND "HISTORY OF MODERN GREECE."

Z.h-18

"L'UNION FAIT LA FORCE."—MOTTO OF BELGIUM.

Z-h-18

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LIBRARY

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.
1841.

914.93
Ten; Sal
86127

LONDON:
PRINTED BY SCHULZE & CO., 13, POLAND STREET.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD STANLEY, M.P.

&c. &c.

MY DEAR LORD,

My desire to inscribe this page with your name, is associated with the recollection of the period when you filled one of the highest administrative offices in Ireland; and when your firm and vigorous discharge of it, effectually stifled the designs of those, whose measures, if tolerated, would have drawn down upon that country, consequences similar to those which similar proceedings have, unhappily, entailed upon Belgium. The value and effect of that nervous policy, by which you "boldly muzzled treason" then, is attested by the contrast, which the social condition of Ireland exhibits now, under the nominal government of those who have submitted to abandon it; and whose sacri-

fices to purchase the loyalty, and secure the permanent attachment of the Irish Repealers, have been rewarded by an intimation of a prospective fraternization with the "hereditary enemies of England," so soon as their "compact alliance," with the English administration shall have expired.

"History is philosophy teaching by example;" and it is not to be supposed that there are not, even amongst the zealots for the Repeal of the Union in Ireland, some few who will be attentive to its lessons. it is chiefly in this anxious hope, that I have transcribed the present volumes. The more so too, because Belgium is the one bright example, which those who have addressed themselves to unsettle the allegiance of the Irish people, have always ostentatiously paraded for their imitation and encouragement. From this selection they cannot now retreat; and I confidently believe, that the exposition contained in the following pages of the condition of that country, after ten years of separation and

independence, will exhibit Belgium to Ireland, if as an example at all, only as—

Exemplar vitiis imitabile.

Neither the social nor the material prosperity of Belgium, affords anything encouraging to the hopes of those who can profit by the experience of others; and as, in Ireland, the materials in which the vital experiment must be made are similar, the results to be anticipated must be the same. With Popery, merely as a complexion of Christianity—as a distinctly marked form of religion—a legislator has no further concern, than as regards the question of enlightened toleration. But *political Popery*, that character in which the followers of the Church of Rome, are exhibiting themselves in Belgium and in Ireland—"resting their lever on one world," as Dryden says, "to move another at their will"—enters essentially, and of necessity, into the investigation and study of the statesman. And, in no instance, in modern times, has it so unreservedly exhibited itself, as in the concep-

tion, the achievement, and the results, of the Belgian revolution. It remains to be seen, whether the Liberal party in Ireland, whose co-operation encourages and sustains the advocates of the Repeal of the Union, will relish the prospect of such an absolute religious ascendancy of the majority in that country, as that which has succeeded to the most absolute freedom of worship, and the most unlimited liberty of conscience in the Low Countries.

On the score of substantial and material prosperity, a similar question must arise. The application of machinery to every branch of production, has effected a revolution in the economy of European manufactures, which is only paralleled by the effects, upon learning, of the discovery of printing. The poorest, and, occasionally, the smallest communities, have been, at various times, the most successful producers of certain commodities, which were the offspring of hand labour, and the fruits of individual dexterity; and the price of which, therefore, was not sensibly af-

fected by the greater or less amount of their consumption. But when human ingenuity became infused into iron—when the industry and adroitness of a million of hands had been concentrated in the single arm of the Briareus of steam—the movements of the mighty prodigy became necessarily expanded in proportion to its power, and required a correspondingly enlarged field for their display. To produce successfully by machinery, it is indispensible to produce extensively; but Belgium, apparently unconscious of this important truth, proceeded to contract, instead of enlarging, her limits; and her powers of production, thus cribbed and restrained, without the opportunity of exercise, have pined and wasted away and are now on the brink of decay.

The two banks, east and west of the Rhine, present at this moment a singular and striking illustration of the opposite effects of the cultivation or neglect of this principle in modern manufacture. *To the right*, we have the numerous little industrious states and principalities of Western Germany,

each ambitious of acquiring manufacturing power, and each possessing it to a certain extent; but each unable, till lately, to succeed or prosper, owing to the narrowness of its individual bounds; till, at last, awakened to a consciousness of their real and actual wants, they, by one simultaneous movement, levelled every intervening barrier, and threw their united territories into the one grand area of the Prussian Commercial League; the success of which has hitherto realized their utmost expectations.

On the left of the Rhine we had, ten years ago, Belgium and Holland enjoying that *union* which Germany has but lately attained, and reaping all the advantages which it was possible to derive from it—till, in the "madness of the hour," the latter undid the very bonds of her prosperity, reversed the process by which Germany is rising to prosperity, and, resorting to repeal and separation, she has lost, as a matter of course, every advantage which she had drawn from union and co-operation. A similar proceeding cannot fail to inflict

similar calamities upon Ireland; and the same destruction of her manufactures which has followed the exclusion of Belgium from the markets and the colonies of Holland, would inevitably overtake the manufacturers of Ireland, if placed upon the footing of a stranger and a rival in the ports and colonies of Great Britain.

It is with an ardent hope that the question of the Repeal of the Union in Ireland may be tested by arguments such as these, by those who will pause to weigh it at all, that I have ventured to bring before its advocates the real condition of that country which their own leader has selected for their example and their model. And conscious of the deep interest which your Lordship has ever taken in the condition of Ireland, and your intimate acquaintance with her wants and her resources, I am anxious to recommend my exertions to notice by the prestige of your name.

At the same time, as I have never submitted to you in conversation or otherwise the contents of these volumes, it is possible

that you may dissent from opinions which I have ventured to express. But my object has been merely to collect facts as to the influence of the recent revolution, and I neither discuss the policy of the settlement of Holland as concluded at the Congress of Vienna, nor question the prudence of those governments in Europe, which, after the events of 1830, found it necessary to put an end to hostilities by concurring in the independence of Belgium.

I remain,

My dear Lord,

Most truly yours,

J. EMERSON TENNENT.

17, Lower Belgrave Street, Belgrave Square,
London, February 22, 1841.

ANNONCE.

THE details regarding the commerce and manufactures of Belgium, which will be found in the following pages, are the result of personal enquiry, corrected by the annual statistical returns, published by the Belgian Government, and confirmed by the labours of M. Briavionne in a recent work, to which I have frequently referred—"*De L'Industrie en Belgique.*" It may, also, give them some additional weight, to add, that the opinions expressed, arose out of visits made to the principal manufacturing districts, accompanied by two gentlemen of extensive practical acquaintance with the manufacturers of Great Britain; Mr. Thom-

son of Primrose, near Clitheroe, and Mr. J. Mulholland, of Belfast, a member of a family, the extent of whose machinery and productions in the staple commodity of Ireland—the linen trade—is, I believe, the greatest in the kingdom. And though these volumes, or their contents, have not actually been submitted to their inspection, I believe that I have their perfect concurrence in the sentiments which they embody, upon the subject of the trade and manufactures of Belgium.

CONTENTS

OF THE

FIRST VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

OSTEND, the Harbour—Canal Docks—Police—Economy of a private carriage for a party on the continent—General aspect of Ostend—Effluvia—Siege in 1604—Fortifications—Promenade—Sands and sea-bathing — Commerce—BRUGES, the railroad—Belgium naturally suited to railroads—Old canal travelling to Bruges superseded—Appearance of the city—Its style of ancient houses—The streets—Canals and gardens—Squares—Style of public edifices—Resembles Pisa—*Ancient history of Bruges*—Its old palaces—Marriages of Charles the Rash and Mary of Burgundy—Singular marriage custom of the middle ages—House in which the Emperor Maximilian was confined—Residences of Edward IV. of England, and of Charles II.—*Commercial greatness of*

Page

Bruges—The Hanseatic League—Her tapestries—The order of the Golden Fleece instituted in her honour—Saying of the Queen of Philip the Fair—Story of the Burghers at the court of John of France—*Her present decay*—Air of reduced nobility—Costume of the middle classes—Grave demeanour of the citizens—No traces of the Spaniards to be found in the Low Countries—*Flemish sculptures in wood*—Pictures—No modern paintings in Bruges—*Collection in the Church of St. Sauveur*—Characteristics of the early Flemish school—The paintings in *the Museum*—Statue of Van Eyck—His claim to be the inventor of oil painting—*Collection in the Chapel of the Hospital of St. John*—Story of Hans Hemling—The cabinet of St. Ursula—The folding-doors of the Flemish paintings—The Hospital of St. John—Statue by Michael Angelo—TOMBS OF MARY OF BURGUNDY AND CHARLES THE RASH—The tower of Les Halles—Carillon—Splendid view—The *Palais de Justice*—Superb carved mantel-piece—*Hotel de Ville*—Its statues destroyed by the French revolutionists — Diamond setters — Comparison of Bruges and Tyre—Mr. Murray's hand-books—The manufacture of lace in Belgium. . . . 1

CHAPTER II.

Bruges a cheap residence—Tables-d'Hôte, their influence upon society—Canal from Bruges to Ghent—Absence of country mansions—Gardens—Appearance of GHENT—M. Grenier and M. de Smet de

Page

Naeyer—The *Conseil de Prud'hommes*, its functions—Copyright of designs in Belgium—THE LINEN TRADE OF BELGIUM—Its importance—Great value of Belgian flax—Its cultivation—Revenue derived from it—Inferiority of British flax—Anxiety of the government for the trade in linen—Hand-spinners—Spinning by machinery—*Société de la Lys*—Flower gardens—The Casino—Export of flowers—General aspect of the city—*Its early history*—Vast wealth expended in buildings in the Belgium cities accounted for—Trading corporations—Turbulence of the people of Bruges and Ghent—*Jacques van Artevelde*—His death—Philip van Artevelde—Charles V.—His *bon mots* regarding Ghent—Latin distich, characteristic of the Flemish cities—Siege of Ghent, Madame Mondragon—House of the Arteveldes—Hôtel de Ville—The belfry and Roland—The *Marché de Vendredi*—The great cannon of Ghent. . . 44

CHAPTER III.

Manufacture of machinery in Ghent—Great works of the Phœnix—Exertions of the King of Holland to promote this branch of art—His success—Policy of England in permitting the export of tools—Effect of their prohibiting the export of machines upon the continental artists—Present state of the manufactures in Belgium—*The Phœnix*, its extent, arrangements and productions—*The canal of Sas de Gand*—*The Beguinage*—Tristam Shandy—The churches of Ghent—Religious animosity of the Roman Ca-

Page

tholics—*The cathedral of St. Bavon*—Chef-d'œuvre of Van Eyck — Candelabra of Charles I — Carved pulpit—*Church of St. Michael*—Vandyck's crucifixion—The brotherhood of St. Ivoy—Church of St. Sauveur—Singular picture in the church of St. Peter—Dinner at M. Grenier's—Shooting with the bow—Roads in Belgium—Domestic habits of the Flemings—The Flemish language—*Count d'Hane* — Mansion of the Countess d'Hane de Steenhausen — Gallery of M. Schamps — *The University* of Ghent—State of primary education in Belgium. 93

CHAPTER IV.

The market-day at Ghent—The peasants—The linen-market — The Book-stalls — *Courtrai* — The Lys—*Denys*—Distillation in Belgium—AGRICULTURE IN FLANDERS—A Flemish farm—Anecdote of Chaptal and Napoleon—Trade in manure—*The Smoor-Hoop* —Rotation of crops — CULTIVATION OF FLAX—Real importance of the crop in Belgium — Disadvantageous position of Great Britain as regards the growth of flax—State of her importations from abroad and her dependency upon Belgium—In the power of Great Britain to relieve herself effectually — System in Flanders — *The seed* — Singular fact as to the Dutch seed—Rotation of crops— Spade labour—Extraordinary care and precaution in *weeding—Pulling*—THE ROUISSAGE—In Hainault—In the Pays de Waes—At Courtrai—The process in Holland—The process in the Lys—*A Bleach-green*

Page

—The damask manufacture in Belgium—A manufactory in a windmill—Introduction of the use of *sabots* into Ireland—*Courtrai*, the town—Antiquities—The Church of Notre Dame—Relic of Thomas à Becket—THE MAISON DE FORCE AT GHENT—The System of prison discipline—Labour of the inmates—Their earnings—Remarkable story of Pierre Joseph Soëte—Melancholy case of an English prisoner—*A sugar refinery*—State of the trade in Belgium—Curious frauds committed under the recent law—*Beet-root sugar*—Failure of the manufacture—A tumult at Ghent—*The New Theatre*—Cultivation of music at Ghent—Print works of M. Desmet de Naeyer—Effects of the Revolution of 1830 upon the manufactures of Belgium—Opposition of Ghent and Antwerp to a separation from Holland—M. Briavionne's exposé of the ruin of the trade in calico printing—Smuggling across the frontiers—Present discontents at Ghent—Number of insolvents in 1839—General decline of her manufactures. 128

CHAPTER V.

The railroad—Confusion at Malines—Country between Ghent and Dendermonde—*Vilvorde*—*The Palace of Laeken*—First view of Brussels—The Grand Place in the old town—The Hôtel de Ville and Maison Communale—The new town—The churches of Brussels—*The carved oak pulpits of the Netherlands*—ST. GUDULE monuments—Statue of Count F. Merode—Geefs, the sculptor—Notre Dame de la Chapelle—

Page

The museum—Palais de l'Industrie—The gallery of paintings — THE LIBRARY — Its history—*Remarkable MSS.*—Curiosities in the museum of antiquities—Private collections—Rue Montagne de la Cour —The theatre—Historical associations with the Hôtel de Ville—Counts Egmont and Horn—The civil commotions of Philip II—*The fountains of Brussels*—The Cracheur—*The Mannekin,* his memoirs—Fountain of Lord Aylesbury—Dubos' restaurant—The hotels of Brussels—Secret to find the cheapest hotels in travelling 186

CHAPTER VI.

The Belgian revolution has produced no man of leading genius — The present ministry — M. Rogier — M. Liedtz, the Minister of the Interior—An interview at the Home Office—Project of steam navigation between Belgium and the United States—Freedom of political discussion in Belgium—*Character of King Leopold*—Public feeling in Brussels — The original union of Holland and Belgium apparently desirable —Commercial obstacles—Obstinacy of the King of Holland—Anecdote of the King of Prussia—The extraordinary care of the King for manufactures — *Prosperous* condition of Belgium under Holland—*Les Griefs Belges*—Singular coincidence between the proceedings of THE REPEALERS IN IRELAND AND THE REPEALERS IN BELGIUM—Ambition for separate nationality—Imposition of the Dutch language unwise—Abolition of trial by jury—Now disliked by

Page

the Belgians themselves — Financial grievances — Inequality of representation — CONDUCT OF THE ROMAN CATHOLICS—Hatred of toleration —Attachment of the clergy to Austria—*Remarkable manifesto of the clergy to the Congress of Vienna*—Resistance to liberty of conscience, and freedom of the press—Demand for tithes—Resistance of the priests to the toleration of Protestants—The official oath—*Protest of the Roman Catholic Bishops against freedom of opinion and education by the State* — Perfect impartiality of the Sovereign—Resistance of the priesthood—*The Revolution*—Union of the Liberals and Roman Catholics—Intolerant ambition of the clergy—Separation of the *Clerico-liberal party*—Present state of parties in the legislature—Unconstitutional ascendancy of the priests—*State of public feeling*—Universal disaffection—Curious list of candidates for the crown of Belgium in 1831—" *La Belgique de Leopold,*" its treasonable publications — Future prospects uncertain—Vain attempts to remedy the evils of the revolution—*Connexion with the Prussian League refused* —Impossibility of an union with Austria or Prussia —Union with France impracticable — Partition of Belgium with the surrounding states—*Possible restoration of the House of Nassau in the event of any fresh disturbance.* 217

INDEX

TO SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH THE

TRADE AND MANUFACTURES OF BELGIUM.

Fisheries, i. 9.
Lace, manufacture of, i. 41.
Conseils de Prud'hommes, i. 51.
The Linen Trade, i. 55, 68, 129.
Cultivation of Flax, i. 56, 137.
Linen Yarn Mills, i. 63; ii, 193.
Export of Flowers, i. 72.
Manufacture of Machinery, i. 93, 99; ii. 25, 174.
Exportation of Machinery from England, i. 94; ii. 185.
Distillation, i. 131.
Flemish Agriculture, i. 133.
Bleaching, i. 150.
Crushing of Oil, i. 151; ii. 106.
Manufacture of Wooden Shoes, i. 152.
Refining of Sugar, i. 161.
Beet-root Sugar, i. 167.
Calico-printing, i. 170.
Carpet-weaving, ii. 28.

Carriage-building, ii. 29.
Books, ii. 29.
Transit Trade of Belgium, ii, 45.
Shipping, ii, 40.
Silk Trade, ii. 45.
Cotton Trade, ii. 91.
Gilt Leather chairs, ii. 109.
Railroads, ii. 119.
Brewing, ii. 131.
Cutlery, ii. 157.
Paper, Manufacture of, ii. 163.
Coal Mines, ii, 168.
Fire-arms and Cannon, ii. 191.
Woollen Trade, ii. 199.
Joint Stock Companies, ii. 204.
General State and Prospects of Belgian Manufacturers, i. 81; ii. 210.

BELGIUM.

CHAPTER I.

OSTEND AND BRUGES.

OSTEND, the Harbour—Canal Docks—Police—Economy of a private carriage for a party on the continent—General aspect of Ostend—Effluvia—Siege in 1604—Fortifications—Promenade—Sands and sea-bathing — Commerce—BRUGES, the railroad—Belgium naturally suited to railroads—Old canal travelling to Bruges superseded—Appearance of the city—Its style of ancient houses—The streets—Canals and gardens—Squares—Style of public edifices—Resembles Pisa—*Ancient history of Bruges*—Its old palaces—Marriages of Charles the Rash and Mary of Burgundy—Singular marriage custom of the middle ages—House in which the Emperor Maximilian was confined—Residences of Edward IV. of England, and of Charles II.—*Commercial greatness of Bruges*—The Hanseatic League—Her tapestries—The order of the Golden Fleece instituted in her honour—Saying of the Queen of Philip the Fair—Story of the Burghers at the

court of John of France—*Her present decay*—Air of reduced nobility—Costume of the middle classes—Grave demeanour of the citizens—No traces of the Spaniards to be found in the Low Countries—*Flemish sculptures in wood*—Pictures—No modern paintings in Bruges—*Collection in the Church of St. Sauveur*—Characteristics of the early Flemish school—The paintings in *the Museum*—Statue of Van Eyck—His claim to be the inventor of oil painting—*Collection in the Chapel of the Hospital of St. John*—Story of Hans Hemling—The cabinet of St. Ursula—The folding-doors of the Flemish paintings—The Hospital of St. John—Statue by Michael Angelo—TOMBS OF MARY OF BURGUNDY AND CHARLES THE RASH—The tower of Les Halles—Carillon—Splendid view—The *Palais de Justice*—Superb carved mantel-piece—*Hotel de Ville*—Its statues destroyed by the French revolutionists—Diamond setters—Comparison of Bruges and Tyre—Mr. Murray's hand-books—The manufacture of lace in Belgium.

September, 1840.

AT sunset when about ten to fifteen miles from land, we had the first sight of the coast of the "Low Countries," not as on other shores discernible by hills or cliffs, but by the steeples of Nieuport, Ostend, and Blankenburg rising out of the water; presently a row of wind-mills, and the tops of a few trees and houses, and finally a long line of level sand stretching away towards

Walcheren and the delta of the Scheldt. Within fourteen hours from heaving up our anchor at the Tower, we cast it in the harbour of Ostend, a narrow estuary formed where the waters of a little river have forced their way through the sand-banks to the sea. An excellent quay has been constructed by flanking the sides of this passage with extensive piers of timber, whilst the stream being confined by dams and sluices above, is allowed to rush down at low water, carrying before it to the sea, any silt which may have been deposited by the previous tide.

At the inner extremity of the harbour, spacious basins have been constructed for the accommodation of the craft which ply upon the Canal de Bruges, which connects that town with Ghent and Ostend, but its traffic is now much diminished by the opening of the railroad, as well as from other causes.

Neither the police nor the custom-house officials, gave any inconvenience with our passports or our baggage, beyond a few

minutes of unavoidable delay, and within half an hour from the packet touching the pier, we found ourselves arranged for the night at the Hotel de la Cour Impériale in the Rue de la Chapelle.

I may here mention as a piece of recommendatory information to future travellers, that the journey, of which these volumes are a memento, was performed in an open English carriage, the back seat of which was sufficiently roomy to accommodate three persons, leaving the front for our books, maps and travelling comforts, and the box for our courier and a postillion; and that except upon mountain roads, we made the entire tour of Belgium, Rhenish Prussia, and Germany, from Bavaria to Hanover, with a pair of horses. For such a journey, no construction of carriage that I have seen is equal to the one which we used, a britscka, with moveable head, and windows which rendered it perfectly close at night or during rain.* I have not made a minute calculation as to expenses, but

* Made by Nurse and Co. Crawford Street, Bryanstone Square.

even on the score of economy, I am inclined to think this mode of travelling, for three persons and a servant, will involve *less actual outlay* than the fares of diligences, and Eil Wagens or Schnell posts. In Belgium, our posting, with two horses, including postillions, fees and tolls, did not exceed, throughout, elevenpence a mile; in Prussia, ninepence; and in Bavaria, even less. Besides the perfect controul of one's own time and movements, is a positive source of economy, as it avoids expense at hotels, while waiting for the departure of stages and public conveyances, after the traveller is satisfied with his stay in the place where he may find himself, and is anxious to get forward to another. Between the advantages gained in this particular, and the means of travelling comfortably at night almost without loss of sleep, through some of the sandy and uninteresting plains of northern Germany, I am fully of opinion that our English carriage, independently of its comparative luxury, not only diminished the expense of our journey, but actually

added some weeks to its length, within the period which we had assigned for our return. In Belgium, however, and Saxony where railroads are extensively opened, a carriage affords no increase of convenience, on the contrary, in *short stages*, which should be avoided, it will be found to augment the expense without expediting the journey.

Ostend presents but a bad subject for the compilers of guide books, as it does not possess a single "lion," nor a solitary object, either of ancient or modern interest, for the tourist. Its aspect too is unsatisfactory, it is neither Dutch, French, nor Flemish, but a mixture of all three, and its houses with Dutch roofs, Flemish fronts, and French interiors, are painted all kinds of gaudy colours, red, green and blue, and covered with polyglot sign boards, announcing the nature of the owner's calling within, in almost all the languages of Northern Europe.

Being built in a dead flat, the town has of course no sewers—it was Saturday evening when we arrived, and in honour of the

approaching Sabbath, I presume, every house within the walls seemed busied in pumping out its cesspool and washing the contents along the channels of the streets, creating an atmosphere above that "all the perfumes of Arabia would not sweeten." This, however, is an incident by no means peculiar to Ostend, the great majority of the cities in the "Low Countries" being similarly circumstanced.

Although a place of importance five hundred years ago, every trace of antiquity in Ostend has been destroyed by the many "battles, sieges, fortunes," it has passed. It was enclosed in the fifteenth century, fortified by the Prince of Orange in the sixteenth, and almost razed to the ground in its defence against the Spaniards in the seventeenth, when Sir Francis Vere, (one the military cavaliers, whom, with Sir Philip Sydney and others, Elizabeth in her capricious sympathy, had from time to time sent to the aid of the protestant cause in the Netherlands), held its command at the close of its remarkable siege by the forces of the Archdukes

Albert and Isabella.* This memorable siege, which the system of antiquated tactics then in vogue, protracted for upwards of three years, "became a school for the young nobility of all Europe, who repaired, to either one or the other party, to learn the principles and the practice of attack and defence." The brothers Ambrose and Frederick Spinola here earned their high reputation as military strategists, and the former eventually forced Ostend to surrender, after every building had been levelled by artillery, and innumerable thousands had found a grave around its walls. In the subsequent troubles of the eighteenth century, it was again repeatedly besieged and taken, sharing in all these disastrous wars which have earned for Belgium, the appropriate soubriquet of the "Cock-pit of Europe." Its fortifications are still maintained in tolerable repair, one large battery called Fort Wellington, is of modern construction, and a long rampart,

* So styled in the act by which Philip II, ceded to them the Sovereignty of the Low Countries.

which was originally designed to protect the town from the inundation of the sea, has been converted into a glacis, and strengthened with stone, brought, at a considerable cost, from Tournay, as the alluvial sands of Flanders cannot supply even paving stones for her own cities. The summit of this defence is an agreeable promenade along the sea, which rolls up to its base, and as far as the eye can reach, stretch long hills of sand, which the wind sets in motion, and has driven into heaps against the walls and fortifications. The level and beautiful strand, however, renders Ostend an agreeable bathing-place, and it is fashionably frequented for that purpose during the months of summer, when the town presents the usual *agréments* of a watering place, baths, ball rooms, cafés, and a theatre.

As the second sea-port in the kingdom, it enjoys a considerable share of the shipping trade of Belgium, but it has no manufactures, and the chief emoluments of the lower classes, arise from the fishery

of herrings and oysters, the bed of the latter, "le parc aux huitres," being the leading lion recommended by the valet-de-place, to the notice of the stranger at Ostend; and the green oysters of Ostend *(huitres vertes d'Ostende)*, one of the luxuries of the Parisian gourmands. Oysters are, indeed, the first dish introduced at every Belgian dinner-table, and the facility of the railroad has considerably augmented the demand at Ostend.

The herring fishery has, of late years, almost disappeared from the coast of Flanders. It was once one of the most lucrative branches of trade in the Low Countries; and Charles V, when he visited the grave of Beukelson, who discovered the method of pickling herrings, at Biervliet, near Sluys, caused a monument to be erected over his remains. With the Reformation, however, and the lax observance of Lent upon the continent, the demand for salted fish declined, and Holland herself now retains but a remnant of her

ancient trade; which, however, she cultivates with a rigid observance of all its ancient formalities—the little fleet of fishing boats assemble annually at Vlaardingen, at the entrance of the Maas—the officers assemble at the Stad-huis, and take the ancient oath to respect the laws of the fishery; they then hoist their respective flags, and repair to the church to offer up prayers for their success. The day of their departure is a holiday on the river. The first cargo which reaches Holland, is bought at an extravagant price, and the first barrel which is landed on the shore, is forwarded as a present to the King.

Ostend, Blankenburg, Nieuport, Antwerp, and even Bruges, had once a valuable share in this important fishery, but it has of late years been utterly lost; not more than three sloops, we were told, having put to sea in any year since 1837, and even then with indifferent success. The cod-fishery, however, has been more prosperous, employing between five and six

hundred seamen at Ostend alone ; but even this is bolstered and sustained by the unsound expedient of government bounties.

BRUGES.

We left Ostend for Bruges by the railroad, sending forward our carriage to Ghent. The fare for the entire distance is little more than for one half, the trouble of mounting and dismounting, being the same for the longer as for the shorter stage. The arrangements of the railroad differ in no essential particular from those of England, except that every passenger's luggage is more scrupulously examined and charged for extra weight, after which, it is taken from the custody of the owner, who receives a ticket, on the production of which, it is delivered up to him, on reaching the town for which his place has been secured. This system, however, is found to be productive of frequent mistakes and confusion, from trunks and

portmanteaus being sent beyond their destination, or left behind altogether. The conductors and officials are all arrayed in uniform, and the starting of the train from each station is announced by a few notes of a trumpet. The engines are chiefly of English manufacture, with the exception of a few made at Liege.

Belgium is of all countries in Europe the best calculated for railroads; its vast alluvial plains, hardly presenting a perceptible inequality. From Ostend to Ghent, I scarcely noticed a single cutting or an embankment, the rails being laid upon the natural surface of the ground, and the direction as straight as the flight of an arrow, without the necessity of a curve or inclination, except to approach some village station on the road.

The old mode of conveyance by the Trekschuit, on the Canal de Bruges, though not discontinued, is comparatively deserted for the railroad. It is, however, by no means disagreeable, the boats being drawn along at the rate of nearly six miles an

hour, the accommodation excellent and unique, and the only drawback, the effluvia which in summer arises from the almost stagnant waters of the canal, occasionally heightened by the poisoned streams in which flax had been steeped by the farmers, which is instantly fatal to the fish.

The air and general appearance of Bruges, on entering it by the railroad, which passes direct into the centre of the town, cannot fail to arrest the interest and attention of a stranger. It is unlike any place that one has been accustomed to before, and is certainly the most perfect specimen of a town of the middle ages on this side the Rhine. Its houses have not been rebuilt in modern times, and with their ample fronts, vast arched entrances and sculptured ornaments, and fantastic gables, are all in keeping with our stately impressions of its feudal counts and affluent but turbulent burghers. "Le voyageur," says its historian, M. Ferrier, "au milieu de ces vieux hôtels, de ces pierres féodales encore debout, espère toujours qu'une noble dame au chaperon de

velours et au vertugadin élargi, va sortir des portes basses en ogives le faucon au poign, la queue retroussée par un page."

Instead of the narrow, dingy passages which occur in cities of similar antiquity and renown, there is an air peculiarly gay and imposing in the broad and cheerful streets of Bruges; its streets enlivened by long lines of lindens and oriental plane trees, and traversed by canals, not sluggish and stagnant, but flowing with an active current through the city. Upon these, the wealthier mansions open to the rear, a little ornamented "pleasance" separating them from the river, laid out in angular walks, and ornamented with evergreens, clipped *en quenouille*, and here and there a statue or an antique vase. The squares maintain the same character of dignity and gravity, overshadowed with "old ancestral trees," and flanked by their municipal halls and towers—the monuments of a time when Bruges was the Tyre of Western Europe, and her Counts and citizens combined the enterprize and wealth of the mer-

chant with the fiery bearing of the soldier. These edifices, too, exhibit in their style something of the sturdy pride of their founders, presenting less of ornament and decoration than of domineering height and massive solidity, and striking the visitor rather by their strength than their elegance. On the whole, Bruges reminded me strongly of Pisa, and some of the towns of northern Italy, whose history and decline are singularly similar to its own. The air of its edifices and buildings is the same, and there is around it a similar appearance of desertion rather than decay—though in Bruges the retirement and solitude which was, till recently, its characteristic, has been much invaded by the concourse of strangers whom the railroad brings hourly to visit it.

Bruges, in the olden time, was indebted for its political importance to its being the most ancient capital of the Low Countries, and one of the residences of the old "Foresters of Flanders," and of that illustrious line of sovereign Counts and Dukes, whose dy-

nasty extends almost from Charlemagne to Charles V, and whose exploits enrich the annals of the crusades and form the theme of the romancers and minstrels of the middle ages. Of the palaces of these stormy potentates, scarcely a vestige now remains, except a few dilapidated walls of the "Princenhof," in which Charles le Téméraire espoused Margaret of York, the sister of our Edward IV, and in which, also, his interesting daughter, Mary of Valois, Duchess of Burgundy, married Maximilian of Austria, son to Frederick IV—that "portentous alliance," which subsequently brought the Netherlands under the dominion of the Emperor, and consigned them, on the abdication of Charles V, to the tender mercies of the sanguinary Philip of Spain. At her nuptials, the Duke of Bavaria acted as proxy for the imperial bridegroom, and according to the custom of the period, passed the night with the young duchess, each reposing in full dress, with a sword placed between them, and in the

presence of four armed archers of the guard.

On the opposite side of the same square, stands, likewise, the house, now an estaminet, in which her husband, Maximilian, then King of the Romans, was, after her death, confined by the citizens of Bruges, in 1487, in consequence of a dispute as to the custody of his two children, in whom, by the death of their mother, was vested the right to the sovereignty of Flanders. In spite of the fulminations of the Pope, and the march of the Emperor, his father, with an army of forty thousand men, the undaunted burghers held him a prisoner for six weeks, till he submitted to their terms and took an oath to respect their rights, and exact no vengeance for their violent demonstration in their assertion.

Bruges was, likewise, upon two occasions the asylum of the exiled monarchs of England; once when Edward IV took refuge there, when flying from the Earl of Warwick's rebellion; and, again, when

Charles II, in his exile, occupied a house in the Place d'Armes, at the corner of the Rue St. Amand. It is now the shop of a tailor.

But all our recollections of Bruges are crowded with associations of the poetry of history; and the very names of her chieftains, Baldwin of the Iron Arm, Robert of Jerusalem, Margaret of Constantinople, Philip the Handsome, and Louis of Crecy, call up associations of chivalry, gallantry and romance.

From the thirteenth century to the close of the sixteenth, Bruges was at once in the plentitude of her political power and the height of her commercial prosperity. As the furs and iron of the north were not yet carried by sea round the Baltic, and the wealth of India still poured through the Red Sea into Genoa and Venice, Bruges became one of the great entrepots where they were collected, in order to be again distributed over Western Europe; and with Dantzic, Lubeck, Hamburg, and a few other trading cities of the west, Bruges became

one of the leading commandaries of the Hanseatic League. The idea of marine insurances was first acted upon at Bruges in the thirteenth century, and the first exchange for the convenience of merchants was built there in the century following.

Her manufactures were equally celebrated with her traffic and her trade. Her tapestries were the models, and, indeed, the progenitors of the Gobelins, which were established in France by a native of Bruges, under the patronage of Henry IV ; and the fame of her woolstaplers and weavers has been perpetuated in the order of the Golden Fleece, the emblem of which was selected by Philip the Good in honour of the artizans of Bruges.

It was a native of Bruges, Beham, who, fifty years before the enterprise of Columbus, ventured to "tempt the western main," and having discovered the Azores, first led the way to the awakening of a new hemisphere.

Of the luxury of her citizens in this age, many traditions are still extant ; such as

that of the wife of Philip the Fair exclaiming on finding herself eclipsed in the splendour of her dress by the ladies of her capital :—" *Je croyais être ici la seule reine, mais j'en vois plus de cent autour de moi !*" A similar story is recorded of their husbands, who when they returned to Paris with their Duke, Louis le Mael, to do homage to King John, the successor of Philip of Valois, felt affronted on finding that no cushions had been provided for them at a banquet to which they were invited by the King, and having sat upon their embroidered cloaks, declined to resume them on departing, saying :—" *Nous de Flandre, nous ne sommes point accoutumés où nous dinons, d'emporter avec nous les coussins.*"

All this has now passed away, other nations have usurped her foreign commerce, and her own rivals at home have extinguished her manufactures. But still in her decline, Bruges wears all the air of reduced aristocracy ; her poor are said to be frightfully numerous in proportion to

her population, but they are not, as elsewhere, ostentatiously offensive; except a few decrepid objects of compassion, by the door of the cathedral, we did not see a beggar in the streets. The dress of the lower orders is remarkable for its cleanliness and neatness, and an universal costume with the females of the bourgeoisie, was a white muslin cap with a lace border and a long black silk cloak, with a hood which covered the head, and is evidently a remnant of the Spanish mantilla. There was, also, a cheerful decorum in the carriage of the people whom we met in the streets, that one felt to be in accordance with the gravity of such a venerable old place, as if the streets were consecrated ground:

> The city one vast temple, dedicate
> To mutual respect in word and deed,
> To leisure, to forbearances sedate,
> To social cares, from jarring passions freed.*

By the way, it is an instance of the abiding hatred with which the people of the

* Wordsworth's Sonnet to Bruges.

Low Countries must have, traditionally, regarded their former tyrants, that so few traces of their dominion or their presence should now be discernible in the country which they so long blasted with their presence. Occasionally, one recognizes in the olive complexion and coal black eye of the Fleming, the evidences of her southern blood; and at Ghent and Brussels there are one or two families who still bear the names of Alcala, Rey and Hermosa, and a few others who trace their origin to Castilian ancestors; but there are no striking monuments now existing of a people, who so long exercised a malignant influence over the destinies of Flanders.

It is true that but a short period, about a century and a half, elapsed from the death of Mary of Burgundy to that of Albert and Isabella, but it is equally true, that for generations before, the princes of the Low Countries had sought their matrimonial alliances at the court of Spain; and under Philip the Handsome and Charles V, when the Netherlands were in the pride of their

prosperity, they afforded an alluring point for the resort of the adventurers of that country, and of the numbers who availed themselves of the royal encouragement to settle there; it is curious that not a mansion, not a monument, or almost a remnant should now be discernible.

In Bruges, as in most other catholic cities, the chief depositaries of objects of popular admiration are the churches; and of these, the most attractive and remarkable are the matchless sculptures in wood which decorate the confessionals and pulpits, and in the richness and masterly workmanship of which, the specimens in the Netherlands are quite unrivalled. Bruges is rich in these. In the church of Notre Dame, the pulpit is a superb work of art of this description; chiselled in oak, supported by groups of figures the size of life, and decorated throughout with arabesques and carvings of flowers and fruit of the most charming execution. It is of vast dimensions for such a work, reaching from the floor almost to the gothic roof of

the building. In the same church there are two confessionals of equal elegance, each separated, as usual, into three apartments by partitions, in front of each of which are caryatides, which support the roof.

In the church of the Holy Saviour,* the grand organ presents another example of this gorgeous carving; and in the little chapel of St. Sang, which is possessed of a few drops of *the genuine blood of our Saviour*, periodically exhibited in its jewelled shrine to the faithful, there is a pulpit, perhaps, of better workmanship than taste, the shell of which represents the terrestrial globe, (orbis veteribus cognita), with a delineation of those geographical outlines which were known at the period of its erection.

In works of art, the burghers of Bruges seem to have been generous as well as ambitious in adorning their city, so long as its municipal affluence placed it within their power to gratify their tastes. The churches, are, therefore, rich in works of the *early*

* Query, St. Salvador.

Flemish school—the Van Eycks and Hans Hemling, and Pourbus and their collaborators and successors: but at the period when the new Flemish school had arisen, with Otto Vennius, and attained its eminence under Rubens and Vandyk, Bruges had already suffered her decline, the sun of her prosperity had gone down, and she possesses no works of their pencil. The chief depositaries of paintings in the city, are the church of St. Sauveur, the chapel of the Hospital of St. John, and the Gallery of the Museum near the Quai du Miroir. The three collections present precisely the same array of names, and the same features of art, insipid and passionless faces, figures harsh and incorrect in drawing, finished with that elaborate care which seems to have been at all times the characteristic of the schools of both Flanders and Holland, and gaudy, inharmonious colours, upon a brilliant and generally gilded ground, in the Byzantine style. Except as mere antiquities, these pictures have but little interest to any except the

mere historian of the art. The collection in St. Saveur I did not see, as it had been removed in consequence of a recent fire, but it seems from the lists to be rather extensive.

That in the *Museum* is numerous, but monotonous and tiresome, for the reasons I have mentioned, though Sir Joshua Reynolds speaks with high approbation of some beauties, I presume, it requires the eye of an artist to discern them. The gallery here contains, also, a statue, by Calloigne, a native artist, of John Van Eyck, the painter, called "John of Bruges," to whom has been ascribed the invention of painting in oil. His claim to the discovery is, of course, incorrect, as the mummy cases of Egypt sufficiently attest, but his merit as one of those, who, earliest and most successfully applied it to the purposes of art, is sufficiently indicated by a glance at his pictures, and their comparison with the inferior productions of his contemporaries in Italy.

But the principal exhibition of the old

masters of Bruges, is in the parlour of the chapel at the ancient *Hospital of Saint John*. Here the pride of the custodian are the chef-d'œuvres of Hans Hemling. Hemling was a soldier and a roué, a prodigal and a genius utterly unconscious of his power. He ended a career of excesses by enlisting in one of the military companies of Bruges, his native city, and from the battle of Nancy, whither he had followed Charles the Rash, in 1477, he was carried, wounded and dying, to the Hospital of St. John. The skill of the leeches triumphed, however, and Hans was restored to strength and vigour, when, for want, perhaps, of some other asylum, he spent ten years of his subsequent life amongst his friends in the hospital, and enriched its halls with the choicest specimens of his art. These pictures are of marvellous brilliancy, although it is said, that Hemling rejected the use of oil, which had been introduced by his contemporary and rival, Van Eyck, and adhered to the old plan of tempering his colours with size and albumen. The artist, too, has introduced into them portraits

of the nuns and sisters of charity, who were the attendants of the sick in the hospital—a delicate and yet lasting memorial of his gratitude for their kindnesses towards himself.

Amongst a number of portraits and scriptural subjects, the gem of the collection is a little, old-fashioned *cabinet*, probably intended for the reception of relics, some three feet long and broad in proportion, covered with a conical lid, and the whole divided into pannels, each containing a scene from the legend of St. Ursula, and the massacre of herself and her eleven thousand virgins, by the Goths, at Cologne. This curious little antique is so highly prized, that it is shown under a glass cover, and the directors of the hospital refused to exchange it for a coffer of the same dimensions in solid silver. The execution of the paintings has all the characteristic faults and beauties of its author, only the former are less glaring from the small dimensions of the figures. The faces of the ladies exhibit a good perception of female beauty,

and St. Ursula herself has her hair plaited into braids and drawn behind her ear, much in the fashion of the present time in England.

The majority of the other pictures have the folding doors which were peculiar to all the painters of the Low Countries, till Rubens latterly dispensed with the use, though they are to be seen on his matchless "Descent from the Cross," and some others of his pictures in the cathedral at Antwerp. They served to close up the main composition when folded across it; and as they are, themselves, painted on both sides, so as to exhibit a picture whether closed or open, they had the effect of producing five compartments all referring to the same subject, but of which the four outward ones are, of course, subsidiary to the grand design within.

The hospital in which these pictures are exhibited, is one of the best conducted establishments of the kind I have ever seen. Its attendants, in their religious costume, and with their nun's head-dresses, move about

it with the quiet benevolence which accords with their name, as "sisters of charity," and the lofty wards, with the white linen of the beds, present in every particular an example of the most accurate neatness and cleanliness.

Both it and the churches I have named, stand close by the station of the railway by which the traveller arrives from Ghent or from Ostend. Besides their curious old paintings, the churches have little else remarkable; they are chiefly built of brick, and make no very imposing appearance. That of the St. Sauveur, contains a statue in marble attributed to Michael Angelo, and though not of sufficient merit to justify the supposition, is in all probability the work of one of his pupils. The story says, that it was destined for Genoa, but being intercepted on its passage by a Dutch privateer, was carried to Amsterdam, where it was purchased by a merchant of Bruges, and presented to his native city.

But the chief object of interest, and, indeed, the grand lion of Bruges, is the

tomb of Mary of Burgundy in a little chapel of the same cathedral. The memory of this amiable Princess, and her early fate are associated with the most ardent feelings of the Flemings ; she was the last of their native sovereigns, and at her decease, their principality became swallowed up in the overgrown dominion of the houses of Austria ; like Charlotte of England, she was snatched from them in the first bloom of youth, she died before she was twenty-five, in consequence of a fall from her horse when hawking, and the independance of her country expired with her. Beside her, and in a similar tomb, repose the ashes of her bold and impetuous father, Charles the Rash, which was constructed by order of Philip of Spain. The chapel in which both monuments are placed, was prepared for their reception at the cost of Napoleon, who, when he visited Belgium, with Maria Louisa, in 1810, left a sum of money to defray the expense of their removal. Both tombs are of the same model, two rich sarcophagi, composed of very dark stone,

ornamented with enamelled shields, and surmounted by recumbent statues, in gilded bronze, of the fiery parent and his gentle daughter. The blazonry of arms upon the innumerable shields which decorate their monuments, and the long array of titles which they record, bespeak the large domains, which, by successive alliances, had been concentrated in the powerful house of Burgundy. The inscription above the ashes of Charles the Rash, is as follows:

CY GIST TRES HAVLT TRES PVISSANT ET MAGNANIME PRINCE CHARLES DVC DE BOVRG^ne^ DE LOTHRYCKE DE BRABANT DE LEMBOVRG DE LVXEMBOVRG ET DE GVELDRES CONTE DE FLANDRES D'ARTOIS DE BOVRG^ne^ PALATIN ET DE HAINAV DE HOLLANDE DE ZEELANDE DE NAMVR ET DE ZVTPHEN MARQVIS DV SAINCT EMPIRE SEIGNEUR DE FRISE DE SALINS ET DE MALINES, LEQVEL ESTANT GRANDEMENT DOVÉ DE FORCE CONSTANCE ET MAGNANIMITÉ PROSPERA LONGTEMPS EN HAVLTES ENTREPRINSES BATAILLES ET VICTOIRES TANT A MONTLHERI EN NORMANDIE EN ARTHOIS EN LIEGE QVE AVLTREPART JVSQVES A CE QVE FORTVNE LVI TOVRNANT LE DOZ LOPPRESSA LA NVICT DES ROYS, 1476 DEVANT NANCY FVT DEPVIS PAR LE TRES HAVT TRES PVISSANT ET TRES VICTORIEVX PRINCE CHARLES EMPEREUR DES ROMAINS V^me^ DE CE NOM SON PETIT NEPHEV HERITIER DE SON NOM VICTOIRES ET SEIGNORIES

TRANSPORTE A BRVGES OV LE ROI PHILIPPE DE CASTILLE LEON ARRAGON NAVARE ETC. FILS DUDICT EMPEREVR CHARLES LA FAICT METTRE EN CE TOMBEAU DU COTÉ DE SA FILLE ET VNIQVE HERITIERE MARIE PEMME ET ESPEVSE DE TRES HAVLT ET TRES PVISSANT PRINCE MAXIMILIEN ARCHIDVC D'AVSTRICE DEPVIS ROI EMPEREVR DES ROMANS—PRIONS DIEV POVR SON AME.—AMEN.

The sincere and unaffected sorrow of those who raised a monument to the Princess, is much more impressively bespoken in the simple and natural language of its inscription. After recapitulating the pompous honours of her house, and her greatness as a Queen, they have thus expressed affectionate esteem for her as a woman and a wife. "Five years she reigned as Lady of the "Low Countries, for four of which she lived "in love and great affection with my Lord, "her husband. She died deplored, lamented "and wept by her subjects, and by all who "knew her as was never Princess before. "Pray God for her soul. Amen.

The most conspicuous object in Bruges, both from a distance and within the walls, is the lofty tower of an ancient building,

called "Les Halles"—an edifice of vast extent, whose original destination seems to be but imperfectly known, but which, in all probability, served as a depot for merchandize during the palmy days of the Hanseatic League, whilst in its ponderous tower were deposited the ancient records of the city. The lower buildings are now partly unoccupied, and partly used for the purposes of a covered market, and on the tower are stationed the warders, who, night and day, look out for fires in the streets of the city or the suburbs. It contains, likewise, one of those sweet carillons of bells, which, in their excellence, seem to be peculiar to the Netherlands, as in no other country that I am aware of do their chimes approach to any thing like harmonious music. In the tower of Les Halles and some others in Belgium, they are set in motion by a huge cylinder with moveable keys, similar to those in a barrel organ or a Geneva box. The tunes are arranged and altered every year at Easter, and the carillon, besides announcing every hour, is played almost daily for the

amusement of the citizens. But besides the mechanical arrangement, there are keys which can be played on at pleasure, and during our visit, the "chief musician" commenced this feat, hammering with his fists, defended first by strong leather, and tramping with his heels, till every muscle in his whole body seemed called into action—an exercise very like that of Falstaff's recruit Bullfrog, when he "caught a cold *in ringing in the king's affairs* upon the coronation day."

The view from this tower is really surprising, owing to the vast level plain in which it stands, and which stretches to the horizon without an undulation upon every side; the view is only limited by the ability of the eye to embrace it, and the sight is bewildered with the infinity of villages, towers, forests, canals and rivers which it presents, taking in at one vast glance, the German Ocean, the distant lines of Holland, the towers of Ghent, and to the south, the remote frontier of France. Its views, like almost every thing else in the Nether-

lands, are peculiar to itself, and in the repose and richness of cultivated beauty, have not a parallel in any country of Europe.

In a small square adjoining that in which stands the tower of Les Halles, are two other ancient buildings of equal interest. The *palais de justice* occupies the site of the old "palace of the Franc or liberty of Bruges." It contains in one of its apartments, (the others are chiefly modern,) a remarkable mantel-piece of carved oak, covering the entire side of the hall, and consisting of a number of statues the size of life, let into niches decorated with the most elaborate and beautiful carvings, and surmounted by the armorial bearings of Burgundy, Brabant, and Flanders. This singular specimen of the arts, dates from the reign of Charles V. and contains statues of the Emperor himself, with Maximilian, and Mary of Burgundy to his left hand; on his right, those of Charles le Téméraire, and his Lady Margaret of York. These specimens of the perfection to which

this description of modelling has attained amongst the Flemings, must really be seen, in order to be sufficiently comprehended.

The other building adjoining is the *Hotel de Ville*, a small, but elegant example of the gothic architecture in the fourteenth century. The many niches which now stand empty at each compartment of its front, were formerly filled with statues of the native Princes of Flanders and Burgundy, to the number of thirty-three; numerous shields, charged with arms surmounted the principal windows, and on a little balcony in front, the Dukes, on the occasion of their inauguration, made oath to respect the rights and privilege of their subjects. But in 1792, the soldiers of the French directory, under Dumourier, in the "fine frenzy" of republicanism, tore down these ancient monuments of the former history of Bruges, as "the images of tyrants" and pounding them to dust, flung them upon a pile composed of fragments of the gallows and the scaffold, and ordered it to be

kindled by the public executioner. The grand hall in the Hotel de Ville is occupied as a library, and contains a large and valuable collection of books and manuscripts.

Bruges was the birth-place of Berken, who discovered the art of polishing the diamond, and, as if the secret were still confined to the craft, (in fact it was for a length of time a secret amongst the jewellers of the Low Countries), one still sees over many a door in Bruges, the sign-board of the "Diamanzetter," who resides within.

In other cities, one would feel as if compiling a guide-book in noting these particulars of Bruges; but here it is different, as every spot, however trifling, is exalted by some traditionary association with the past. "In the thirteenth century," says the Hand-book, "the ambassadors of twenty states had their hotels within the walls of the city, and the commercial companies of seventeen nations were settled and carried on their traffic within its walls. It became the resort of traders of Lombardy and

Venice, who carried hither the merchandize of Italy and India, to be exchanged for the produce of Germany and the north. The argosies of Genoa and Constantinople, frequented her harbour, and her warehouses were stored with the wool of England, the linen of Belgium, and the silk of Persia."* Can any one read this record of the past, and comparing it with the desolation of the present, avoid being reminded of the magnificent description and denunciation of Tyre, by Ezekiel. "Fine linen from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth for thy sails; the inhabitants of Zidon were thy mariners; the men of Persia were thine army; and they of Gammadin were on thy towers, and hung their shields upon thy walls to make thy beauty perfect. Tarshish was thy merchant, and with iron and with tin

* I must take this early opportunity of adding my tribute of gratitude to the compiler of these most invaluable volumes, the Hand-books of Northern and Southern Germany, they have been my constant companions, and I cannot do less than unite with every tourist, whom I met on the continent, in pronouncing them as matchless in the value and variety of their contents, as they are faultless in their accuracy.

they traded in thy fairs. Syria gave thee emeralds and broidered work, and coral, and agate. Judah traded in thy markets in honey, and oil, and balm. Damascus in the wine of Hebron and white wool. Arabia occupied with thee in lambs and in goats; and the merchants of Sheba brought thee precious stones and gold. * * * They that handle the oar, the mariner and pilots of the sea, shall come down from thy ships; they shall stand upon the land, and in their wailing they shall cry, what city is like unto Tyre, like unto the destroyed in the midst of the waters?"

Of all her active pursuits, Bruges now retains no remnant except the manufacture of lace, to which even her ancient fame has ceased to give a prestige; and it is exported to France to be sold under the name of *Point de Valenciennes.* Mechlin, Antwerp, Ypres and Grammont share with her in its production; and it is interesting to observe how this mignon and elegant art, originally, perhaps, but the pastime of their young girls and women, has survived all the

storms and vicissitudes which have from time to time suspended or disturbed the other national occupations of the Belgians, and now enables the inhabitants of their superannuated cities, in the ruin of their own fortunes, to support themselves, as it were, upon the dower of their females. France, in the time of Colbert, seduced the manufacture to establish itself at Paris by actual gifts of money; and England, emulous of sharing in it, purchased the lace of Belgium to sell to Europe as her own, and made by it such a reputation, that *English lace* is still a popular name for a particular description made at Brussels!

The exquisitely fine thread which is made in Hainault and Brabant for the purpose of being worked into lace, has occasionally attained a value almost incredible. A thousand to fifteen hundred francs is no unusual price for it by the pound, but some has actually been spun by hand of so exquisite a texture, as to be sold at the rate of ten thousand francs, or upwards of £400, for a single pound weight. Schools have been

established to teach both the netting of the lace and drawing of designs by which to work it, and the trade, at the present moment, is stated to be in a more flourishing condition than it has been ever known before, even in the most palmy days of the Netherlands.

CHAPTER II.

GHENT.

Bruges a cheap residence—Tables-d'Hôte, their influence upon society—Canal from Bruges to Ghent—Absence of country mansions—Gardens—Appearance of GHENT—M. Grenier and M. de Smet de Naeyer—The *Conseil de Prud'hommes*, its functions—Copyright of designs in Belgium—THE LINEN TRADE OF BELGIUM—Its importance—Great value of Belgian flax—Its cultivation—Revenue derived from it—Inferiority of British flax—Anxiety of the government for the trade in linen—Hand-spinners—Spinning by machinery—*Société de la Lys*—Flower gardens—The Casino—Export of flowers—General aspect of the city—*Its early history*—Vast wealth expended in buildings in the Belgium cities accounted for—Trading corporations—Turbulence of the people of Bruges and Ghent—*Jacques van Artevelde*—His death—Philip van Artevelde—Charles V.—His *bon mots* regarding Ghent—Latin distich, characteristic of the Flemish cities—Siege of Ghent, Madame Mondragon—House of the Arteveldes—Hôtel de Ville—The belfry and Roland—The *Marché de Vendredi*—The great cannon of Ghent.

BRUGES has the reputation of being an economical residence for persons of limited

fortune, but I have reason to believe it does not fully merit it. I have understood, that at the termination of the war, a large mansion with every appurtenance, was to have been had for twenty-five pounds a year, but the concourse of English, and the influx of strangers, has now placed it, in this respect, pretty much upon a par with other places of the continent.

We dined at an excellent table-d'hôte at the Hôtel de Commerce, the only inconvenience being the early hour, 2 o'clock, but this, and even earlier hours for dinner, we became, not only reconciled to, but almost to prefer before leaving Germany. To the prevalence of these tables-d'hôte in every town and village of the continent, must, no doubt, be ascribed much of that social feeling and easy carriage which characterise the people of almost every country in Europe except our own. Being frequented by persons of all ranks, they lead to an assimilation of manners and of taste, which must be conducive to general refinement; and by an interchange of opinions and a diffu-

sion of intelligence during the two or three hours of daily intercourse, they must contribute to a diffusion of information, and a better understanding between all classes.

In England, with our present sectional ideas and well defined grades; their introduction would be impossible, or if attempted, would only serve to make more distinct and compact the divisions into which society is parcelled out. And yet, how desirable would it be that some successful expedient could be discovered to produce a more frequent intercourse between these numerous castes, and to soften down these Hindoo prejudices, which are an unquestionable source of insecurity and weakness in England. It is to this, that in a great degree is to be ascribed the virulence of political jealousies, and the intense hatred of political parties. So long as wealth is constituted the great standard which is to adjust conventional precedence, affluence and intelligence must form one exclusive race, of whose feelings, habits, objects and desires, poverty and ignorance, as they *can*

know nothing, may be easily persuaded to believe them hostile and destructive to their own; and even mediocrity of rank, as it stands aloof from either, will continue to look with alarm and jealousy upon both.

Were it practicable, by any salutary expedient, to enable the humble and laborious *to perceive for themselves*, that the enjoyments and habits of the rich are not necessarily antagonist to their own, it would at once paralyze the strength of the demagogue and the incendiary. Religious bigotry and political malignity, like sulphur and nitre, are explosive only when combined with the charcoal of ignorance.

The railroad from Bruges to Ghent, runs for the entire way within view, and frequently along the bank of the canal which connects the two cities, and which occasionally presents greater beauty than one is prepared to expect; its waters folded over with the broad leaves of the water lilly, and variegated with its flowers, and those of the yellow bog bean; and its steep banks covered with the tassels of the flow-

ering rush. The road passed through numerous copses, cultivated for firewood and planted with the oak, the chesnut and the weeping birch, with here and there broad patches of firs and hornbeam. But the beauty of the long lines of ornamental trees which enclose the road and sometimes border the canals in Flanders, is much impaired by the fashion of pollarding their tops for the purpose of fuel.

One misses, also, the numerous seats and mansions of the landed gentry to which we are familiarized in travelling in our own country, "the happy homes of England," that constitute the rich luxuriance of a British landscape. But here, their erection is discountenanced by the law against primogeniture, by which the property of the individual is compulsorily divided amongst his heirs; and, at former periods, their absence may, perhaps, be ascribed to the insecurity of the country, perpetually visited with war and all its accessories, so that men found their only safety within the walls of their fortified

towns. In the neighbourhood of Ghent, however, they are more frequent than in any other district of Belgium which I have seen, an evidence, perhaps, of the more abundant wealth of its successful manufactures and merchants.

In the vicinity of all the villages and suburbs, each house is provided with a garden, richly stocked with flowers, (amongst which the multitude of dahlias was quite remarkable), and surrounded, not by a fence, but more frequently, in gardens of any extent, by a broad dyke of deep water, covered with lillies and aquatic plants. Every inch of ground seemed to have been subjected to the spade, and with a more than Chinese economy of the soil, made to contribute either to the decoration or the support of the owner's dwelling.

After passing the hamlets of Bloemendael (the valley of flowers), and Aeltre, we came in sight of Ghent, situated on a considerable elevation above the water of the Scheldt (pronounced *Skeld*), the Lys, the Lieve, and the Moer, which meet

around its base, and with their communicating branches and canals, divide the city into six-and-twenty islets, connected by upwards of eighty bridges of wood or stone. Its towers and steeples are discernible for some miles before it is reached, mingled with the tall chimnies of its numerous manufactories, which mark it as the Manchester of Belgium.

The court-yard of the station was filled with a crowd of omnibuses, fiacres and *vigilantes*, an improvement upon the cabs of London, and a drive of a few minutes brought us to the Cauter, or Place d'Armes, where, following the direction of the Handbook, we stopped at the Hôtel de la Poste, a spacious house, kept by a M. Oldi, who, we were told, was son to a Baroness of the same name, who figured on the occasion of the trial of Queen Caroline.

GHENT.

My anxiety was to learn something of the actual state of manufacturing industry

in Belgium, and Ghent, its principal seat and centre, presented the most favourable opportunities. Our introductions were numerous, but my chief obligations are to *M. Grenier*, one of the most intelligent and accomplished men of business whom it has been my good fortune to meet. He had been formerly an officer in the Imperial Guard of Napoleon, whilst Belgium was a province of the empire, but on the return of peace, in 1815, betook himself to pursuits of commerce, and is now connected with some of the most important manufacturing and trading establishments of Belgium. I owe a similar acknowledgment for the polite attentions of *M. de Smet de Naeyer*,* an eminent manufacturer, and one of the officers of the Chamber of Commerce and of the Conseil de Prud'hommes at Ghent.

The latter body which is an institution, originally French, was introduced in Bel-

* It is the custom in Belgium, in order to distinguish one member of the same family, to append to the surname of the husband that of his lady.

gium by a decree of Napoleon in 1810. It is a board formed jointly of employers and workmen, elected by annual sections, and discharging all its functions, not only gratuitously as regards the public, but without payment to its own members, beyond the mere expenditure of the office, and a moderate salary to a secretary. Its duties have reference to the adjustment of the mutual intercourse between workmen and their masters in every branch of manufacture, the prevention of combinations, the performance of contracts, the regulation of apprenticeship, and the effectual administration of the system of *livrets*—a species of permanent diploma, which the artisan received on the termination of his pulpilage, signed by the master to whom he had been articled, and sealed by the President of the Conseil de Prud'hommes. Without the production of his *livret*, no tradesman can be received into employment; and in it are entered all his successive discharges and acquittances with his various masters. The powers of fining and of forfeiture exer-

cised by the conseil, are summary up to a certain amount, and in cases of graver importance, there is a resort to the correctional police.

But the main functions of the Conseil de Prud'hommes are the prevention of any invasion of the peculiar rights of any manufacturer, or the counterfeit imitation of his particular marks; and especially the protection of the copyright of all designs and productions of art for the decoration of manufactures. With this view, every proprietor of an original design, whether for working in metals or on woven fabrics, is empowered to deposit a copy of it in the archives of the council, enveloped in a sealed cover, and signed by himself; and to receive in return a certificate of its enrolment, and the date of reception. At the same time, he is called upon to declare the length of time for which he wishes to secure to himself the exclusive right of its publication, whether for one, two, or three years, or for ever, and in either case, a trifling fee is demanded, in no instance ex-

ceeding a franc for each year the protection is claimed, or ten for a perpetuity.* In the event of any dispute as to originality or proprietorship, the officer of the council is authorized to break the seal, and his testimony is conclusive as to the date and circumstances of the deposit.

The effect of this simple and inexpensive tribunal has been found so thoroughly effectual, that the most equitable security has been established for designs of every description applicable to works of taste, and the *intellectual property* of a pattern has been as thoroughly vindicated to its inventor through the instrumentality of the register of the Prud'hommes, as his *material property*, in the article on which it is to be impressed, is secured to him by the ordinary law. In fact, the whole operation of the institution at Ghent has proved so beneficial to manufactures universally, that by a *projet de loi* of 1839, similar boards are about to be established in all the lead-

* At Ghent, this fee has been reduced to one half the sum.

ing towns and cities, as Liege, Brussels, Courtrai, Antwerp, Louvain, Mons, Charleroi, Verviers, and the manufacturing districts, generally, throughout Belgium.

One of our first visits was to a mill for spinning linen yarn, recently constructed by a joint stock company, called *La Société de la Lys*, in honour, I presume, of the Flemish river on which it is situated, and which is celebrated on the continent for the extraordinary suitability of its waters for the preparation of flax. Belgium, from the remotest period, even, it is said, before the Christian era, has been celebrated for its manufacture of clothing of all descriptions. It was from Belgium that England derived her first knowledge of the weaving of wool; damask has been made there since the time of the Crusades, when the soldiers of Godfrey of Bouillon and of Count Baldwin, brought the art from Damascus; and to the present hour, the very name of "*Holland*" is synonymous with linen, and the cloth so called, has for centuries been woven principally in Flanders.

Under the government of Austria, the manufacture seems to have attained its acmé of prosperity in the Netherlands, her exports of linen, in 1784, amounting to 27,843,397 yards, whilst at the present moment, with all her increase of population and discoveries in machinery, she hardly surpasses thirty millions. Again, under the continental system of Napoleon, from 1805 to 1812, it attained a high degree of prosperity, which sensibly decreased after the events of 1814, when English produce came again into active competition with it.

The cultivation of flax is still, however, her staple employment, one acre in every eighty-six of the whole area of Belgium, being devoted to its growth. In peculiar districts, such as Courtrai and St. Nicolas, so much as one acre in twenty is given to it; and in the Pays de Waes, it amounts so high as one in ten. Every district of Belgium, in fact, yields flax, more or less, except Luxembourg and Limburg, where it has been attempted, but without success;

but of the entire quantity produced, Flanders alone furnishes three-fourths, and the remaining provinces, one. The quality of the flax, too, seems, independently of local superiority in its cultivation, to be essentially dependent upon the nature of the soil in which it is sown. From that around Ghent, no process of tillage would be sufficient to raise the description suitable to more costly purposes; that of the Waloons yields the very coarsest qualities; Courtrai those whose strength is adapted for thread; and Tournai alone furnished the fine and delicate kinds, which serve for the manufacture of lace and cambric.

Of the quantity of dressed flax prepared in Belgium, calculated to amount to about eighteen millions of kilogrammes, five millions were annually exported to England and elsewhere, on an average of eight years, from 1830 to 1839. According to the returns of the Belgian custom-houses, the export has been as follows—from 1830 to 1839.

1831	5,449,388	kilogr.
1832	3,655,226	,,
1833	4,392,113	,,
1834	2,698,870	,,
1835	4,610,649	,,
1836	6,891,991	,,
1837	7,403,346	,,
1838	9,459,056	,,

It is important to observe the steady increase of the English demand since 1834. The remainder is reserved for home manufacture into thread and cloth, and it is estimated by M. Briavionne, that the cultivation of this one article alone, combining the value of the raw material with the value given to it by preparation, in its various stages from flax to linen cloth, produces annually to Belgium, an income of 63,615,000 francs.*

Belgium possesses no source of national wealth at all to be put into comparison

* De l'Industrie en Belgique, Causes de Decadence et de Prosperité, &c. par M. N. Briavionne, Bruxelles, 1839, vol. ii, p. 345.

with this, involving as it does, the concentrated profits both of the raw material and its manufacture, and, at the present moment, the attention of the government and the energies of the nation are directed to its encouragement in every department, with an earnestness that well bespeaks their intimate sense of its importance.

Nor are the prudent anxieties of the Belgium ministry on this point without serious and just grounds. Their ability to enter into competition with England in the production of either yarn or linen cloth, arises solely from the fortunate circumstance to which I have just alluded, that not only do they themselves produce the raw material for their own manufactures, but it is they, who, likewise, supply it to their competitors, almost at their own price. *Such is the superiority of Belgian flax, that whilst, in some instances, it has brought so high a price as* £220 *per ton, and generally ranges from* £80 *to* £90*; not more than* £90 *has in any instance that I ever heard of, been obtained for*

British, and its ordinary average does not exceed £50.

The elements of their trade are, therefore, two-fold, the growth of flax, and secondly, its conversion by machinery into yarn and cloth. In the latter alone, from the relative local circumstances of the two countries, it is utterly impossible that Belgium could successfully maintain the contest with England, with her inferior machinery, her more costly fuel, and her circumscribed sale; but aided by the other happy advantage of being enabled to supply herself with the raw material at the lowest possible rate, and her rivals at the highest, she is in possession of a position of the very last importance.

But, should any circumstance arise to alter this relative position, should England wisely apply herself to the promotion of such an improvement in the cultivation and dressing of her flax at home as would render it in quality equal to that for which she is now dependent for her supply from abroad—should India or her own colonies

betake themselves to its production, or should some other country, adopting the processes of Belgium, supplant her in the market, and thus rèduce her competition with England to a mere contest with machinery, the linen trade of Belgium could not by any possibility sustain the struggle, and her staple manufacture for centuries would pass, at once, into the hands of her rivals.

Conscious of their critical situation in this respect, the King of Holland, during his fifteen years' administration of the Netherlands, bestowed a care upon the encouragement and improvement of their mechanical skill, which may have, perhaps, been carried to an unwise extreme; and with a similar anxiety for the maintenance of their ascendancy in the other department, the ministers of King Leopold have devoted a sedulous attention to the cultivation of flax; and the very week of my arrival at Ostend, a commission had just returned from England, whose inquiries had been specially directed to the question of

imposing restrictions upon its exportation.

Much of the uneasiness of the government upon this head, arises, at the present moment, from the necessity of promoting vigorously the spinning by machinery, and, at the same time, the difficulty of finding employment for the thousands who now maintain themselves by the old system of spinning by hand, and whom the successful introduction of the new process will deprive of their ordinary means of subsistence. Although this is one of those complaints to which we have long been familiarized in England, and which the people of this country have, at length, come to perceive is not amongst—

"Those ills that kings or laws can cause or cure,"

the alarm and perplexity of the Belgians, and their earnest expostulation on finding their employment suddenly withdrawn, have caused no little embarrassment to their

own government; and a formidable party, both in the country and in the House of Representatives, have been gravely consulting as to the best means of securing a continuance of their "ancient industry" to the hand-spinners at home, by restricting the export of flax to be spun by machinery abroad!

The practicability of this, and the propriety of imposing a duty upon all flax shipped for England, was understood to be the subject of inquiry by the commission despatched by the Chambers to England, which consisted of Count d'Hane, a member of the upper house, M. Couls, the representative for the great linen district of St. Nicolas, and M. Briavionne, a successful writer upon Belgian commerce, and one or two other gentlemen connected with the linen trade.

The application of machinery to the manufacture of linen yarn, though comparatively recent in its introduction into Belgium, has, nevertheless, made a surprising progress, and bids fair, if unimpeded, to

maintain a creditable rivalry with Great Britain. The offer by Napoleon, in 1810, of a reward of a million of francs for the discovery of a process by which linen could be spun into yarn with the same perfection as cotton, naturally gave a stimulus to all the artisans of the empire, and almost simultaneously with its promulgation, a manufacturer of Belgium, called Bawens, announced his application of the principle of spinning through water, which is now in universal use. The old system of dry spinning, however, still obtained and was persevered in till superseded, at a very recent period, by the invention of Bawens, improved by all the subsequent discoveries in England and France.

The seat of the manufacture, at present, is at Ghent and Liege, and is confined to a very few extensive establishments, projected by joint stock companies, or Sociétés Anonymes,* for the formation of which,

* By the French commercial code, there are three descriptions of trading companies. First, *sociétés en nom collectif*, with all the attributes of an ordinary partnership in England ;

there has latterly been almost a mania in Belgium. Four of these establishments, projected between 1837 and 1838, proposed to invest a capital amounting amongst the whole, to no less than fourteen millions of francs. One of them at Liege, perfected its intention and is now in action. A second, at Malines (Mechlin), was abandoned after the buildings had been erected, and the other two at Ghent, are still only in process of completion. Besides these, there is a third at Ghent, in the hands of an individual, calculated for 10,000 spindles.

That which we visited belonging to *La Société de la Lys*, may be taken as a fair

secondly, *sociétés en commandite*, where the great majority of the associated capitalists are sleeping partners, with no share in the management, no name in the firm, and responsible only to the extent of their registered capital, one or more of the partners, alone, having the conduct of the establishment, and being responsible to the public to the full extent of their property; and thirdly, the *sociétés anonymes*, which are, in every incident and particular analogous to the joint stock companies of England, only with a liability, limited in every instance to the amount of their shares.

illustration of the progress which the art has made in Belgium, as the others are all constructed on similar models, and with the same apparatus in all respects. It was originally calculated for 15,000 spindles, but of these not more than one third are yet erected, and in motion, and but 5,000 others are in preparation. The steam engines were made in England, by Messrs. Hall, of Dartford, on the principle known as Wolf's patent, which, using two cylinders, combines both a high and low pressure, and is wrought with one half to one third the fuel required for the engines, in ordinary use in England,* an object of vast importance in a country where coals are so expensive as they

* These engines are in great esteem, and I have found them in almost universal use in Belgium. The one alluded to above, was consuming from 5½ to 6½lbs. of coals, per hour, per horse power; whilst a low pressure engine in England, would require from 12 to 14lbs. In this country, they are likewise coming in greater demand, although here the saving of coal is a matter of less importance, and may be, in some degree, counterbalanced by the risk, and more frequent repairs, incidental to high pressure engines.

are in Belgium.* The machinery is all made at the Phœnix works in Ghent, the preparatory portions of it are excellent, and exhibit all the recent English improvements, and in roving they use the new spiral frames. But the spinning rooms show the Belgian mechanics to be still much behind those of Leeds and Manchester, as evinced by the clumsiness and imperfect finish of the frames, although they were still producing excellent work; the yarn we saw being of good quality, but of a coarse descrip-

* The price of coal at Ghent, when I visited its manufactories was 20 francs for 1000 kilogrammes, or about sixteen shillings a ton for coals of Mons, which are brought from a considerable distance by the Scheldt; those of Charleroi are of better quality, and a shade higher in price. Coals have increased in price in Belgium within the last few years, as well from the greater demand, as an apprehension that the coal fields of the Ardennes were rapidly exhausting, but this alarm has of late been regarded as groundless. England, with a liberality, which manufactoring jealousy scarcely sanctions, has recently permitted the free export of coal both to Belgium, France and Prussia, a boon for which these governments, which are prohibiting British manufactures, and their mechanics and mill owners, who are contending with our own for the market, cannot be too grateful.

tion, and intended for home consumption, and for the thread-makers of Lisle. The quantity produced, per day, was quite equal to that of English spinners,* and their wages much the same as those paid in Ireland, and somewhat less than the English.†

On the whole, the linen trade of Belgium,

* Three hundred bundles per day, being as nearly as possible eleven cuts to the spindle.

† COMPARATIVE WAGES PAID WORKERS.

Description of Workers.	Wages per day of 11½ hours. ENGLAND.	Wages per day of 11½ hours. BELFAST.	Wages per day of 11 hours. GHENT.
	Average.	Average.	Average.
	s. d. *s. d.*	*d.*	*s.* *d.*
Spreaders	1 3 to 1 6	10	0 11¾
First Drawing	1 0 .. 1 3	8½	0 8½
Second Drawing	1 0 .. 1 3	8½	0 8½
Roving	1 1 .. 1 5	9	0 9¾
Carding	1 0 .. 1 6	7½ to 9½	0 9¾
Spinner	1 0 .. 1 4	10	0 8½
Doffer	0 8	5½	0 4¾
Reeler (piece work)	1 0 .. 1 6	10 to 11	0 9¾
Dyer	2 6 .. 3 0	1*s.* 4*d.*	1 3
Bundler	2 6 .. 3 0	1*s.* 5½	1 5
Hackler (Roughing for Machine)	1*s.* 6*d.*	1*s.* 4*d.*	1 7
Overlooker	4*s.* 6*d.*	3*s.* 6*d.*	2 4½

These wages, *at present*, paying in Ghent, it must be borne in mind, are hardly a fair criterion, as flax spinning being entirely a new trade there, it was necessary to give an inducement by extra wages, for the cotton spinner's to leave the work to which they were accustomed; but this will soon find its level.

notwithstanding its extensive preparation of machinery, and the extraordinary demand for its flax, must be regarded as in anything but a safe or a permanent position. In those stronger articles which can be made from flax of English growth, the English considerably undersell her already; an important trade is, at this moment, carried on in the north of Ireland in exporting linen goods to Germany, whence they were formerly imported into England, and whence they are still sent into Belgium, where the damask trade of Courtrai, which has been perpetually declining since 1815, is now, all but superseded by the weavers of Saxony and Herrnhut; and the tickens of Turnhout, by those woven from the strong thread of Brunswick.

The contemplated measure of the French government, to impose a heavy duty on the importation of linen-yarn, will, if persevered in, be most prejudicial to the spinners of Belgium, as more or less, it must inevitably diminish their consumption. On the other hand, as England herself may be said to grow no flax for her

own manufacture, and that of Ireland is not only far inferior in quality to the Dutch and Belgian, but inadequate to her own consumption, and every year increasing in demand and rising in price,—so long as Great Britain is thus dependant upon her own rivals for a supply of the raw material to feed her machinery, at an expense of from 8 to 10 per cent, for freight and charges, in addition to its high first cost, and whilst she must, at the same time, compete with them in those continental markets, which are open to them both, the spinning mills of Belgium cannot but be regarded otherwise than as formidable opponents. Nor is this apprehension diminished by the fact, that Belgium, which a few years since had no machinery for spinning yarn, except what she obtained from other countries, or could smuggle from England at a serious cost, is now enabled to manufacture her own, and has all the minerals, metals, and fuel within herself, which combined with industry and skilled labour, are essential to bring it to perfection. For the present, the English manufacturer, has a protection in the cost of

his machinery alone—the factory of the *Société de la Lys* cost £80,000 to erect, which supposing its 10,000 spindles to be in action, would be £8 per spindle, and as only the one half of these are at present employed, the actual cost is sixteen pounds ; whilst an extensive mill can be erected in Ireland for from £4 to £5, and in England for even less. The difference of interest upon such unequal investments, must be a formidable deduction from the actual profits of the Belgians.

We returned to our Hotel by a shady promenade along the *Coupure*, which connects the waters of the Lys with the canal of Bruges, the banks of which planted with a triple row of tall trees, form one of the most fashionable lounges and drives in Ghent. Opening upon it are the gardens of the Casino, a Grecian building of considerable extent, constructed in 1836 for the two botanical and musical societies of Ghent, and, in which, the one holds its concerts, and the other its spring and autumn exhibition of flowers. At the rear of the building is a large amphitheatre with seats cut from

the mossy bank and planted with flowers, where the *Société de St. Cecile* give their Concerts d'Eté, which are held in the open air, in summer, and at which as many as six thousand persons have occasionally been accommodated.

In the rearing of flowers, Belgium and more especially Ghent, has outrivalled the ancient florists of Holland, the city is actually environed with gardens and greenhouses, and those of the Botanical Society, are celebrated throughout Europe for their successful cultivation of the rarest exotics. At Ghent their sale has, in fact, become an important branch of trade; plants to the value of a million and a half of francs having been exported annually, on account of the gardeners in the vicinity; and it is no unusual thing to see in the rivers, vessels freighted entirely with Camellias, Azaleas, and Orange trees, which are sent to all parts of Europe, even to Russia by the florists of Ghent.

The general appearance of the city, without being highly picturesque, is to a stranger, of the most agreeable I re-

member to have seen. It does not present in the mass of its houses and buildings, that uniform air of grave antiquity which belongs to those of Bruges, the greater majority of the streets having been often rebuilt and modernized, as well as from the effects of civic commotions, as to suit the exigencies of trade and manufactures, which, when they deserted the rest of Belgium, seem to have concentrated themselves here. Its modern houses are almost all constructed on the Italian model, with ample *portes-cochers*, spacious court yards, lofty staircases, tall windows, and frequently frescoes and bas-reliefs, to decorate the exterior.* Almost every house is furnished with an *espion*, a small plate of looking-glass fixed outside the window, at such an angle, that all that is passing in the street is seen by those inside, without their appearing themselves.

* One cannot but remark the wretched quality of the window-glass, even in the most luxurious houses. It is uneven, warped, and of a dirty-green colour. It is chiefly made at Charleroi.

Here and there upon the quays and in the narrower streets, there are to be found the gloomy old residences of the "Men of Ghent," now converted into inns or ware-rooms, with their sharp tilted roofs, high stepped gables, abutting on the street, fantastic chimneys, and mullioned windows, sunk deep into the walls. And turning some sudden corner in a narrow passage obstructed by lumbering waggons, drawn by oxen, one finds himself in front of some huge old tower, or venerable belfry, covered with gothic sculpture, and stretching up to the sky till he has to bend back his head to descry the summit of it. One singular old building on the Quai aux Herbes, remarkable for its profusion of Saxon arches and stone carvings, was the Hall of the Watermen, whose turbulent insurrection under John Lyon, is detailed with quaint circumstantiality in the pages of Froissart. But in the main, the streets of Ghent are lively and attractive, and its squares, spacious and planted with trees, forming a striking contrast to the melan-

choly brick and mortar buildings, that compose the manufacturing towns of England. Here too, as in Manchester and Leeds, the population seem all alive and active, but instead of the serious and important earnestness which one sees in every countenance in Lancashire, the Gantois seems to go about his affairs with cheerfulness and alacrity, as if he was less employed on business than amusement. The canals are filled with heavily laden barges, and the quays with long narrow waggons of most primitive construction, into which they unload their cargoes; whilst the number of handsome private carriages, that one sees in every thoroughfare, bespeak, at once, the wealth and refinement of the population. The shops are exceedingly good though not particularly moderate in their charges, and I was somewhat surprised to see as an attraction on the sign boards at the doors of the drapers and modistes, the announcement that *Scotch* and *English goods* were to be had within. Altogether the combination of antique singularity with modern

comfort, commercial bustle, wealth, gaiety, cleanliness, and vivacity, which is to be seen at Ghent, cannot fail to strike the most hurried traveller, and I doubt much whether it is to be found in equal perfection, in any other city of the continent of equal extent.

Every quarter of the city exhibits traces of the former wealth of the burghers, and every building has some tradition characteristic of the fiery turbulence of this little municipal republic. Bruges and Ghent are, in this regard, by far the most interesting towns of Flanders. Brussels, Liege and Ypres, are all of more modern date and infinitively less historical importance, during the stormy period of the Flemish annals from the 12th to the 16th century. Ghent was a fortified town a thousand years ago, when its citadel was erected by Baldwin of the Iron Arm, but it was only with the rage for the Crusades, that the wealth and importance of the towns of the Low Countries arose; when the Seigneurs, in order to obtain funds to equip them for their expeditions to the Holy Land, released the in-

habitants of the towns from their vassalage, and sold to them the lands on which their cities were built, and all the rights of self government, privileges which subsequently assumed the form of a corporate constitution. Ghent thus obtained her independence from Philip of Alsace, in 1178, and for the first time secured the right of free assembly, the election of her own provosts, a common seal, and belfry, always an indispensable accompaniment of civic authority, and important in sounding the alarm and convoking the citizens upon every emergency.

It was in consequence of these momentous concessions, that whilst the lords of the soil and their agrarian followers were wasting their energies in distant war, or subsisting by rapine and violence against one another, the inhabitants of the towns, secured within their walls and fortified places, were enabled to devote themselves to manufactures and to commerce, and thus to concentrate in their own hands, the largest proportion, by far, of the monied wealth of the Netherlands.

But, coupled with their high privileges,

there were also some restrictions, to which we of to-day are indebted for the vast and magnificent edifices which the burghers of these flourishing communities have left for our wonder and admiration. The rights accorded to them by their Seigneurs were rigidly confined to the limits of their own walls, no free burgher could purchase or hold landed estate beyond the circuit of his municipality; and thus, whilst driven to accumulate capital in the pursuit of trade and traffic, they were equally constrained to invest it, not in land, like the retired merchants of modern times, but in the construction of these vast palaces and private mansions, and in the decorations of their dwellings, and the adornment of their cities.

It is to this political circumstance of their position that we are to refer, in order to account for the extent and splendour of those ancient houses which we meet at every turning in Bruges and Ghent—for the costly carvings and sculptured decorations of their fronts and interiors, and for the quantity of paintings and ornaments in which they abound.

The accumulation of their municipal resources, too, required to be similarly disposed of, and was applied to the erection of their lofty belfries, the construction of those gigantic towers which are elevated on all their churches, and to the building of their town halls and hôtels-de-ville, whose magnitude and magnificence, are a matter, equally of admiration of the genius which designed, and astonishment at the wealth which was necessary to erect them.

As the towns increased in prosperity and wealth, money always sufficed to buy from their sovereigns fresh privileges and powers, and fresh accessions of territory to be added to their municipal districts, till, at length, the trades became so numerous as to enroll themselves in companies, half civil and half military, whilst all united to form those trading commandaries or Hansen, the spread of which, over the north-west of Germany, forms so remarkable a feature in the history of commerce and civilization. Foremost in the Netherlands in the race of prosperity was Ghent, which, within a century from its enfranchisement, by Philip

of Alsace, rendered itself, in effect, the capital of Flanders, with an extent and importance even greater than the capital of France, whence Charles V subsequently ventured upon his bon mot, that he could put all Paris in his *glove* "*dans mon gant.*"

But with this increase of prosperity, increased, also, the troubles and cares of these republican communities; their excessive wealth at once engendering internal rivalries and faction, and inviting foreign cupidity and invasion. "Never," says Hallam, "did liberty wear a more unamiable aspect than among the burghers of the Netherlands, who abused the strength she gave them, by cruelty and insolence." The entire history of Bruges and Ghent, but especially the latter, is, in fact, a series of wars, to repel the aggressions of France, or to suppress the turbulence and insurrectionary spirit of their own citizens. These were not the mere tumultuous skirmishes which have been dignified by the title of *wars* amongst the rival cities and states of northern Italy about the same period, and in which it not unfrequently happened that

no blood was spilt; but in the battles of Courtrai, Rosebeke and Everghem, the citizens could send 20 to 40,000 soldiers into the field, and conducted their hostilities almost upon the scale of modern warfare. At Courtrai, "the men of Ghent" carried off seven hundred golden spurs from the defeated nobles of France. When Charles VII was preparing to expel the English from Calais, Philip the Good was able to send him 40,000 men as a subsidy, of whom 16,000 were from Ghent alone.

Nor were these *internal* feuds upon a minor scale. Jacques van Artevelde, the Masaniello of Flanders, and more generally known as "*the Brewer of Ghent*," from his having joined the guild of that trade, from which he was afterwards chosen by fifty other corporations of tradesmen, as the head of each, was enabled to organize such an army of the city companies, as to render his alliance an object of importance to Edward III of England, when making his preparations for invading France.

Under this extraordinary "tribune of

the people," Ghent was enabled, virtually, to cast off its allegiance to the courts of Flanders, to elect Artevelde as their Ruwaert or Protector, and to bid defiance to their native sovereign, backed by all the power of France. Artevelde became the personal friend and counsellor of the English King, who sent ambassadors to his court, and entered into alliance with the city he commanded in conjunction with that of Bruges and Ypres. It was at the suggestion of Artevelde, that Edward quartered the arms of France and assumed the fleur de lis, which for so many centuries was borne upon the shield of England; and it was in the palace of the Flemish demagogue, that Queen Philippa gave birth to a son, whose name has made Ghent familiar in the annals of England:—

"Old John of *Gaunt*, time honoured Lancaster."

The Ruwaert in honour of Philippa gave her name to his son, who, at a subsequent period, became the demagogue of Ghent, and who,

" Dire rebel though he was,
Yet with a noble nature and great gifts
Was he endowed: courage, discretion, wit,
An equal temper and an ample soul,
Rock bound and fortified against assaults
Of transitory passion: but below
Built on a surgeing subterranean fire
That stirred and lifted him to high attempts,
So prompt and capable, and yet so calm.
He nothing lacked in sovereignty but the right;
Nothing in soldiership except good fortune.

Taylor's Philip van Artevelde.

But the fate, like the fortune of Artevelde, was characteristic of the proverbial caprice and vacillations of republican popularity. After being for ten years or more, the idol of the people, he presumed to induce them to expel the Counts of Flanders from the succession, and to acknowledge the Black Prince, the son of his friend, as their sovereign in his stead; but his followers, startled at so bold a proposition, made a pretence for getting rid of their "protector," and massacred Artevelde in his own house, which they burned to the ground, "Poor men raised him," says Froissart, "and wicked men slew him."

Thirty years after, when Flanders, by

the marriage of Margaret with Philip the Hardy, Duke of Burgundy, became united with that sovereignty, and the citizens were again at war amongst themselves, "the men of Ghent" elected Philip van Artevelde, godson of Queen Philippa, and her namesake, the son of their former favourite and victim, as their leader in their strifes with the burghers of Bruges, who were about to cut a canal from their city to Denys, which would have been injurious to the prosperity of Ghent, which had "the harvest of the river for her revenue," when Philip defeated the army of Louis le Mael, entered Bruges in triumph, and carried off the Golden Dragon as large as an ox, which, till lately, surmounted the belfry of Ghent, and is said to have been brought home by the Flemings who followed Count Baldwin to Constantinople.

For sometime, in the heyday of good fortune,

> "Van Artevelde in all things aped
> The state and bearing of a sovereign prince;
> Had bailiffs, masters of the horse, receivers,
> A chamber of accompt, a hall of audience;

Off gold and silver eat, was clad in robes
Of scarlet furred with minever, gave feasts
With minstrelsy and dancing, night and day——"

But the power of France leagued with his native sovereign was irresistible, and at the battle of Rosebeke, he laid down, at once, his usurped authority and his life.

Under the Dukes of Burgundy, the annals of these remarkable military merchants is the same continued story of broils and battles, and the union of Flanders to Austria, by the marriage of Mary of Burgundy, only brought a fresh line of combatants into the Low Countries.

In 1500, Charles V, the grandson of this ominous alliance, was born at Ghent, in the old château of the Counts of Flanders, the remains of which are still to be seen in the Place de St. Pharailde, converted into a cotton factory, the lofty chimney of which now pours its volume of smoke above the cradle of a monarch who made it his boast, that "the sun never set upon his dominions."

With the same fiery independence of their forefathers, the "men of Ghent,"

resisted the despotism of the Emperor as sturdily as they had done the exactions of their Earls and Dukes; and it was after quelling one of these insurrections, that Charles, intent on devising a punishment for their contumacy, was advised by the Duke of Alva, the future Moloch of the Netherlands under Philip II, to raze it to its foundations, when Charles replied by pointing to its towers and palaces, and asking him in a repetition of his former witticism, "combien il croyait qu'il fallait de peaux (*villes*) d'Espagne, pour faire un *gant* de cette grandeur."

Charles, however, exacted a punishment more humiliating, if not so savage as that contemplated by the *bourreau* of the church, by repealing all the charters of the city, dismounting their famous bell, Roland, fining the community, and compelling the ringleaders to supplicate his mercy in their shirts, with halters round their necks, a ceremony which is erroneously said to have been commemorated by the magistrates of Ghent continuing to wear the rope, as a part of their official costume, and

which is still kept alive in the distich which enumerates the characteristics of the Flemish cities :—

> Nobilibus Bruxella viris—Antuerpiæ nummis
> Gandavum laqueis, formosis Brugia puellis
> Lovanium doctis, gaudet Mechlinia stultis.*

With the abdication of Charles V, that most remarkable incident in the history of kings, which took place in the church of St. Gudule at Brussels, and the accession of Philip II, arose the reign of terror in the Netherlands, when Alva and his blood-hounds ravaged Flanders, and their successors, for twenty years, rendered her cities abattoirs of Europe.

In these events, Ghent took a prominent part, and the siege of her citadel, which was garrisoned by the Spaniards, affords the noble story of its defence till reduced by famine, when the Flemish, on its surrender, discovered that its heroic resistance had been the work of a woman, Madame

* The joke against Mechlin arises from an alarm being given that the cathedral was on fire, by some one who had seen the moonbeams shining through its gothic steeple—whence the proverb, that "the wise men of Mechlin went to put out the moon."

Mondragon, the wife of the commandant, who, in the absence of her husband, had assumed his command, and capitulated only when hunger and disease had reduced her little garrison to one hundred and fifty souls, including herself and her children. Philip, weary of the war, and assured of the loss of Holland, which had adopted its liberator, the Prince of Orange, as its sovereign, compromised in some degree with the Flemish, by separating their country from the crown of Spain, and conferring it on his daughter, Isabella, by whose marriage with Albert, it became again united to the house of Austria, under whose dominion it remained, with the exception of its brief occupation by Louis XIV previous to the treaty of Utrecht, till incorporated with the French republic in 1794, and subsequently annexed to Holland in February 1815.

The streets of Ghent are full of monuments and reminiscences of these stormy and singular times. In a small triangular place, called the Toad's-corner (Padden hoek), stood the house of the elder Artevelde

and the scene of his murder; that which has been erected upon the spot, bears an inscription on its front:—" ICI PERIT VICTIME D'UNE FACTION, LE XXVII JUILLET MCCCXXXXV, JACQUES VON ARTAVELDE QUI ELEVA LES COMMUNES DE FLANDRE A UNE HAUTE PROSPERITÉ."

In the *Hôtel de Ville*, one of the enormous edifices of the period, in Moresco gothic architecture, the celebrated declaration, called " the Pacification of Ghent," by which the states of the Netherlands formed their federation to resist the tyrannous bigotry of Philip II, was signed by the representatives of Holland and Belgium in 1576.

Close by it stands the belfry from which Charles V directed the removal of the pride of the burghers, their ponderous bell *Roland*, which, by turns, sounded the tocsin of revolt, or chimed in the carillon of loyalty; the tradition says it was of such dimensions as to weigh six tons, and was encircled by an inscription:—

Mynen naem is Roland—als ick clippe dan is't brandt
Al sick luyde, dan is't *storm in Vlaenderlande.*

"When I ring, there is fire; when I toll, there is a tempest in Flanders."

And many a stormy reveille it must have pealed over the hive of turbulent craftsmen who swarmed around its base.

Not far from the belfry, is the Friday market *(Marché de Vendredi)*, "the forum" of ancient Ghent, where all its municipal ceremonies were solemnized, and all its popular assemblies were convened, to the tolling of their favourite bell; in which, also, the Counts of Flanders took the oath of inauguration, on their accession to the sovereignty. It was here that John Lyon convened his guild of watermen, and persuaded them to assume the old symbol of revolt, the white hood, in order to resist the exactions of Louis le Mael; and it was here that John Breydel, another fiery demagogue, marshalled his band of "lion's claws" in 1300, and led them to the "Battle of the Spurs" at Courtrai; and it was here that Jacques van Artevelde, at the head of his "trades' union," was proclaimed Ruwaert of Flanders. It was here

that the commotions, so quaintly detailed by Froissart, took place between the fullers and the weavers, on Black Monday, in 1345, when the latter were expelled from Ghent, after leaving fifteen hundred of their number dead in the streets; and it was here that, in later times, the ferocious Duke of Alva lit the flames of the inquisition, and consumed the contumacious protestants of the Low Countries.

In Ghent, almost every great event in the chronicles of the old city is, more or less, identified with the Marché de Vendredi. In the centre of its square, the citizens, in 1600, erected a column to the memory of Charles V, which was levelled by the French republicans in 1794, in order to plant the tree of liberty on its foundation.

In a recess of this market-place, stands the wonder of Ghent, "*la merveille de Gand*," an enormous cannon of the fourteenth century, used by Philip van Artevelde, at the siege of Audenarde in 1382; but how it was ever dragged to to the field, or manœuvred in the action, is one of the enigmas of ancient warfare, as it

is upwards of eighteen feet long, ten inches in the diameter of the bore, and weighs thirty-nine thousand pounds. It is made of malleable iron, and is mentioned by Froissart as discharging balls during the siege, with a report which "was heard at five leagues distance by day, and ten by night," and sounded as if "*tous les diables d'enfer fussent en chemin.*" It was brought from Audenarde to Ghent, having, I presume, been left upon the field by the discomfited Flemings. Its popular soubriquet is "*Dulle Greite,*" or Mad Margaret, in compliment to a Countess of Flanders, of violent memory, who is still known by the traditional title of "the Black Lady," given to her by her subjects.

These and a thousand similar records and memorials of the olden time, render a stroll through the streets of Ghent, one of singular interest and amusement; and, perhaps, there is no city of Europe which more abounds in these relics of local history, or has preserved so many characteristics of manners and customs in keeping with its associations of the past.

CHAPTER III.

GHENT.

Manufacture of machinery in Ghent—Great works of the Phœnix—Exertions of the King of Holland to promote this branch of art—His success—Policy of England in permitting the export of tools—Effect of their prohibiting the export of machines upon the continental artists—Present state of the manufactures in Belgium—*The Phœnix*, its extent, arrangements and productions—*The canal of Sas de Gand*—*The Beguinage*—Tristam Shandy—The churches of Ghent—Religious animosity of the Roman Catholics—*The cathedral of St. Bavon*—Chef-d'œuvre of Van Eyck—Candelabra of Charles I—Carved pulpit—*Church of St. Michael*—Vandyck's crucifixion — The The brotherhood of St. Ivoy—Church of St. Sauveur—Singular picture in the church of St. Peter—Dinner at M. Grenier's—Shooting with the bow—Roads in Belgium—Domestic habits of the Flemings—The Flemish language — *Count d'Hane* — Mansion of the Countess d'Hane de Steenhausen—Gallery of M. Schamps—*The University* of Ghent—State of primary education in Belgium.

HAVING heard so much in England of the gigantic scale of the establishments for the construction of machinery in Belgium,

we paid a visit this morning to the great *Phœnix Iron works* at Ghent, the largest in the kingdom ; (indeed, I may presume, the largest in Europe), except those of Seraing near Liege. The surprising progress which the Belgians have, within the last few years, made in this department, is naturally a subject of the deepest interest in this country. Twenty years ago, the manufacturers of the Netherlands were altogether dependant upon France and England, for everything except the most ordinary pieces of machinery, which were used in the simplest processes—but the refusal of Great Britain, to permit its exportation upon any terms, naturally left them no alternative, but either to abandon their manufactures, or to apply their own ingenuity to the construction of machinery for themselves. To the encouragement of the latter attempt, the King of Holland, for the fifteen years that Belgium was under his protection, applied himself with an energy and zeal, that is positively without parallel ; patronage, personal exertions, and pecuniary assistance,

were devoted to the promotion of this important object, with an assiduity and perseverance almost incredible; his efforts were crowned with perfect success, and even his enemies, are forced to admit that the singular developement which has taken place in the resources of Belgium, in this important department, are all to be ascribed to the untiring energy and exertions of the King of Holland.

His efforts were much facilitated by the relaxation, in the meantime, of the policy of England, so far as to permit the free exportation of certain machinery, and what was of infinitely greater importance, *of the most complex and ingenious tools* for its construction. The effects of the latter measure, in particular, and the impetus which it has communicated to the manufacture of machinery, not only in Belgium, but in every other country of Europe which aspires to it, is positively beyond calculation. It gave, at once, to our continental rivals the very arcana of our superiority; tools that are

themselves the most beautiful and elaborate machines, performing like automatons operations that once required all the intelligence as well as all the dexterity of an artisan; lathes and planes that grapple with a beam of iron as if it were green wood, and shape and polish the most ponderous shafts with as much ease as a turner produces an ivory toy.* Placing these un-

* Les machines sont là aussi multipliés, aussi variées que les besoins où on les applique: il y en a une pour chaque pensée, ou plutôt, c'est la même pensée qui a mille ministres; l'une scie, l'autre fend, l'autre coupe, l'autre rabotte; il y en a pour degrossir la pièce, il y en a pour lui donner la forme exacte, il y en a pour l'orner; il y en a pour la polir, le ciseau, le tour, le rabot, l'emporte pièce la tenaille, le marteau tous les instruments du menuisier, du tourneur, du forgeron, s'évertuent sur le fer comme sur le bois la plus tendre, mais sans menuisier, sans tourneur, sans forgeron—*la main qui les meut est une machine*, cette main, toujours sûre, toujours ferme, délicate, légère, qui n'a pas d'inégalité, qui ne depende pas d'une pensée capricieuse, qui ne se lasse pas, qui ne s'alourdit pas, qui ne vieillit pas! * * * * Cette machine n'a besoin de personne: on lui donne sa tâche un certain jour, et pourvu qu'on ne lui retire pas la portion de force motrice qui l'anime, elle terminera cette tâche à jour fixe: elle vous la livrera comme un

reservedly in the hands of the engineers of the continent, and, at the same time, refusing to let them have the articles which they were almost spontaneously to produce, was neither more nor less than peremptorily withholding the fruit, but making no compliment whatever of sending the tree.

The refusal of Great Britain to concede the whole question has, at all times, excited an intense feeling on the continent, and the Belgians themselves are amongst the loudest in denouncing this "jealous and narrow-minded policy of England;" forgetful that they themselves in 1814 adopted identically the same course, and prohibited under pain of fine and imprisonment the exit of their own machinery or artisans, such as they were! Even now, the value of that which England conceded, is forgotten in the importance attached to that which she still withholds, and even the appearance of

ouvrier à la pièce : vous arriverez un beau matin, et vous la trouverez sortie du cylindre et tournant à vide, en attendant que vous lui donniez une nouvelle tâche.—*From an account of the great works at Seraing, in the* REVUE DE PARIS.

mystery connected with the prohibition increases its importance in imagination and whets the appetite to obtain it. A whimsical illustration of their ideas upon the subject occurs in the work of M. Briavionne, who gravely asserts that "the manufacturers of Lancashire, impatient to participate in the cares of the government upon this point, have submitted to a voluntary tax sufficient to organize a perpetual guard, which surrounds Manchester night and day to prevent the exit of machinery."*

However, it is notorious that notwithstanding these sleepless precautions and in spite of every prohibition, machinery of every description is at the present moment smuggled into Belgium, and every other state that requires it—not, perhaps, in such quantities as to serve for the fitting up of

* "Les manufactures de Manchester ne voulant pas s'en remettre de ce soin au gouvernement, se sont cotisés, ont réuni une somme annuelle suffisante pour organiser autour de leur ville une ligne de douane specialement consacré à empêcher la sortie des mécaniques qu'ils inventaient."—De l'Industrie de Belgique, vol. ii, p. 326.

extensive factories, but so as to afford a model of every improvement and every new invention for the instant adoption, and imitation of the continental engineers and mechanicians. Thus provided and thus encouraged, speculating upon capital supplied lavishly by their government, equipped with the most valuable English tools, inspected by English artisans, and working from English models, the Belgians have now far outstripped all the rest of Europe in the manufacture of machines of every description, and in all but the cost of construction, and that beauty of finish which matured skill can alone achieve, they at present bid fair to rival England herself in her peculiar and hitherto undisputed domain.

The establishment of the Phœnix, is one of those which have sprung up, thus stimulated and thus encouraged. It was originally erected by an individual proprietor, M. Huytens Kerremans, in 1821, and attained much of its reputation under the management of an Englishman, named

Bell, so much so, that at the period of the revolution in 1830, it employed upwards of two hundred and twenty workmen daily. In 1836, on the death of the proprietor, it passed into the hands of a joint stock company, by whom it has been enlarged to more than thrice its previous extent, at an expense of upwards of one million of francs. It is at present conducted by Mr. Windsor, a gentleman from Leeds, and is certainly the most admirably arranged establishment of the kind I have ever seen — those of England not excepted.

It at present employs seven hundred hands, of whom two hundred are apprentices, and of the remainder, between fifty and sixty English. The range of its productions includes every species of machine used for spinning flax, cotton, silk, or wool, as well as for other manufactures in which machinery is required, for which there is a brisk demand at present, not only in Belgium, but for Spain, Austria, France and Holland. In point of finish and beauty, the spinning machinery is certainly, as I

have said, inferior to the English, it is also stated to be defective in other respects, but those proprietors of mills who are using it, made no complaints to me upon the subject, and seemed perfectly satisfied with its execution. Some of the heavier articles in process of construction, especially a spiral roving-frame which some English workmen were completing, seemed, in every respect both of finish and action, to be quite equal to those made at Manchester and Leeds.

The establishment contains a preparatory workshop on a comprehensive scale, fitted up with small tools and machinery, and superintended by two competent directors, solely for the instruction of apprentices, and its success we were told had been most gratifying. The Englishmen employed at the Phœnix receive higher wages than the Flemings, but the majority of them are only retained till their original engagements shall have been completed, when their services will be dispensed with, and their places supplied by native work-

86127

men, at wages not exceeding twenty francs per week, and fully competent to undertake their duties.

One important feature in this immense manufactory is, that it is gradually succeeding in making its own tools, instead of importing them as heretofore from England. The majority of those in use had been already constructed upon the spot upon English models, and at the moment we called, a planing machine, twenty feet long, was in process of erection, together with drills, sliding lathes, dividing and filing apparatus, and in short, every description of tool in use in Great Britain. In this respect, the directors assured me of their confidence of being, for the future, perfectly independent of any supply from abroad—but I should add, that afterwards at the rival establishment at Seraing, where all the tools are imported from England, I was told that those made at the Phœnix were not only much more expensive, but of inferior quality.

The works were in full employment at

the period of our visit, from the fact of there being three flax spinning mills in course of construction in Ghent; but it remains to be seen whether its present vigorous prosperity is the result of a permanent cause, and whether the career of Belgian manufactures, and the demand created in consequence, will be such as to maintain in remunerative operation this splendid establishment, as well as that of Seraing and the minor works of the same kind at Brussels, Verviers, Namur, Charleroi and elsewhere.

In the neighbourhood of the Phœnix, we passed the great basin of the Sas de Gand Canal, which by connecting Ghent with Terneuse at the mouth of the Scheldt, has effectually rendered it a sea-port in the heart of Belgium. This bold idea was originally conceived by Napoleon, but carried into effect, and the basin completed, by the King of Holland only two years before he was driven from the country by the revolution. As the embouchure of the canal, however, is situated in Zeeland, a province

of the Dutch dominions, its navigation was effectually closed from 1830 to 1839, when the treaty was ratified, which finally determined the limits of the two States. During those nine years, the magnificent dock at Ghent, and the line of the canal itself, were stagnant, and the passage rapidly filling up with sand and silt, another of the many inconveniences entailed upon the merchants of Belgium by "the repeal of the union." It is at last, however, opened to the trade, and when we saw it, contained a number of vessels, some discharging cotton, and one taking in cargo for the Havanna. During the few months that had elapsed from its opening in October, 1839, upwards of one hundred and twenty vessels had entered and departed by it from Ghent, for Holland, and the Hanse Towns, London, the Mediterranean, and the United States.

On our return we drove to the *Beguinage*, a little enclosed district, appropriated as the residence of an ancient community of nuns, who take no vow, but on contributing to the general funds of the community, are

admitted into the sisterhood, and devote their lives to works of charity and benevolence, especially to attendance on the sick and poor. They are each clad in the costume of the order. For a head-dress, they carry the *beguine*, a veil of white muslin, folded square, and laid flat upon the top of the head, whence they derive their name, with a black silk hood, termed a *faille*, said to have been anciently worn by the ladies of Flanders, and closely resembling, both in name and appearance, the *faldetta* of the Maltese. This interesting society contains between seven and eight hundred members, and occupies not a detached building, as elsewhere, but a little retired section of the city, surrounded by a fosse, and enclosed by a wall, at the gate of which, one of the sisterhood acts as porter. The whole is divided into streets, consisting of rows of quaint looking little houses, of venerable brick-work, with Dutch gables and cut stone windows, each door inscribed with the name of a particular saint, Agatha, Catherine, or Theresa, instead of that of

its occupant. In the centre is a spacious square, with an old Spanish looking church, rather richly ornamented, and containing a few curious paintings and carvings in oak. The order is of very high antiquity, dating some twelve hundred years ago, and the present establishment was founded in the thirteenth century.

When the convents of the Low Countries were reduced in number by the Austrian government under Joseph II, he made a special exemption in favour of the Beguines, they were equally recognized and protected, when the French directory completed the suppression of the remaining religious houses of Belgium, and the King of Holland following the same example, confirmed them, in the possession of their privileges and property, by a charter granted in 1826 or 1827. A number of the sisters occupy a portion of their time in making lace; their dwellings, streets and gardens, are preserved with a "beauty of cleanliness" truly delightful. Every thing we could see or learn of their inmates was charac-

terized by gentleness and goodness, and their active benevolence, (in spite of my uncle Toby's insinuation,) the dictate of their heart, and not of their profession.* In the whole aspect of their dwelling, there was nothing of the

"Relentless walls, whose darksome round contains,
Repentant sighs and voluntary pains."

But a cheerful serenity, and an enlivening interest, very different from the ideas usually associated with the gloom of a convent.

The churches of Ghent in which, as usual, the grand objects of curiosity and vertu are amassed and exhibited, are in point

* "She was in black down to her toes, with her hair concealed under a cambric border, laid close to the forehead she was one of those kind of nuns, and please your honou of which there are a good many in Flanders. "By thy description Trim," said my uncle Toby, "I dare say she was a young Beguine, of whom there are none to be found any where, except in the Spanish Netherlands, they differ from other nuns in this, that they can quit their cloisters, if they chose to marry—they visit, and take care of the sick by profession, but I had rather, for my own part, they did it out of good nature."—STERNE.

of number, richness, and sombre beauty, quite proportionate to the other attractions of Ghent. They are all, (with one exception, that of St. Peter's, which is a copy of the one at Rome,) built in the same venerable and massive style of gothic architecture, with huge square turrets, lofty aisles, rich altars, pulpits of carved oak and marble, and chapels decorated with paintings by the old masters of the Flemish School. The population is almost exclusively Roman Catholic, hardly 2000 of its 95,000 inhabitants being of the reformed religion. For the use of the latter, a church was appropriated by the King of Holland, in 1817, which had once been attached to a convent of Capuchins, and on their suppression, had been converted into a military magazine and hospital by the French. Such, however, was the animosity of the priesthood to this act of toleration on the part of the King, that it was for some time necessary to station a guard, both within the church and without, to protect those

who frequented it from violence or insult. And yet Ghent has the reputation of being the least intolerant and bigoted city in the Netherlands.

The cathedral of St. Bavon, besides being the oldest, is by far the most magnificent in Ghent, and seems, in fact, to have a high reputation for its splendour, as we repeatedly heard of it at subsequent points of our tour. The whole of the basement is occupied by one vast crypt or *souterrain*, the low vaulted arches of which, rest on the shafts of the huge columns which support the roof of the grand edifice above. Like it, it is divided into a series of little gloomy chapels, containing the tombs of some of the ancient families of distinction, and occasionally decorated by pictures and statues of extreme antiquity. The brothers John and Hubert Van Eyck, the painters and their sister, who was likewise an artist, sleep in one grave under the floor of this melancholy vault. Over the grand entrance to the cathedral is a curious old statue of St. Bavon holding a hawk

upon his wrist, a curious attitude, though characteristic of the manners of the times. The coup-d'œil of the interior is surprisingly grand, the choir being separated from the nave and aisles by lofty columns of variegated marbles, and the entrance to each of the four and twenty chapels which surround the church, covered by a screen of neat design, sometimes in carved oak or stone, but more frequently in gilded brass or iron of exquisite workmanship.

The numerous paintings with which the church is covered are few of them of extraordinary merit, they are chiefly by the artists, contemporary and subsequent to Rubens, Crayer, Otto Vennius, Honthorst, Serghers and others. The most remarkable painting is that of the Saint Agneau or adoration of the lamb by the Van Eycks. It is in marvellous preservation, and is one of the most valuable specimens remaining of the school to which it belongs. It contains a profusion of figures, finished with the richness and delicacy of a miniature, and represents the lamb upon an altar, in

the midst of a rich landscape, surrounded by angels, and worshipped by multitudes of popes, emperors, monks and nuns. It is surmounted and surrounded by a number of compartments, containing pictures of the Saviour and the Virgin, and representing divers incidents in the life of the former; in addition to these, there were originally six doors or *volets* to the picture, which, by some ignorance of the persons in charge of them, were actually sold in 1816 for a mere trifle to an Englishman called Solly, from whom they were bought by the King of Prussia, for 400,000 francs, and they now decorate the museum at Berlin. There is also a picture by Rubens, of St. Bavon retiring to a monastery, after having distributed his goods to the poor, which was carried by Napoleon to Paris, and restored in 1819.

The choir, which is finished with carved mahogany, has on either side, at the entrance, two statues of St. Peter and St. Paul casting the viper from his hand, by Van Poucke, a modern Flemish sculptor,

who died at Rome in 1809. Among its other ornaments are four lofty candelabra of polished copper, once the property of Charles I of England, and sold along with the other decorations of the chapel at Whitehall by order of the Commonwealth. Round the altar are also some tombs of the former prelates of Ghent, amongst which, that by Duquesnoy of the Bishop Triest, is regarded as the finest piece of sculpture in the Netherlands. The mitred dignitaries each repose upon his sculptured sarcophagus, or kneel with clasped and upraised hands:

> "Seeming to say the prayer when dead,
> That living they had never said."

Here, again, the pulpit is an extraordinary production in carved wood of huge dimensions, but with white marble ornaments and figures injudiciously intermingled with the rich old oak. The principal figures are statues of Truth awakening Time, and presenting to him the scriptures with the motto, "*surge qui dormis illumi-*

nabit te Christus !" This pulpit, which is far inferior to those at Antwerp and elsewhere, is not by Verbruggen, who is the Canova of wood, but by an artist of Ghent, called Laurence Delvaux, who died about 1780.

The other churches present a succession of objects which is almost as tiresome to visit as it is tedious to enumerate. That of St. Michael, in extent and magnificence, is second only to the cathedral. Amongst a host of ordinary paintings, and some by modern artists, especially one of great merit, by Paelinck, a native of Ghent, it possesses a chef-d'œuvre of Vandyk, a "Crucifixion," in which he has introduced the same magnificent horse as in his picture of Charles V, in the Sal di Baroccio, at Florence. Sir Joshua Reynolds calls it "one of his noblest works." It had been injured by repeated cleanings, but M. Voisin, the historian of Ghent, observes with much naïveté, "qu'il vient d'être restauré par un artiste habile." Who he may be who has ventured to

restore a chef-d'œuvre of Vandyck, M. Voisin discreetly forbears to name.

An association, called the Brotherhood of St. Ivoy, formerly met in this church, which was composed of the most distinguished members of the bar, who gave advice to the poor, and bore the expense of any legal process which it might be necessary to institute for them out of a common fund. This law hospital has not, however, survived the revolution of 1830. The music and choir of St. Michael's are remarkably fine, the organ is of extraordinary richness and volume, and nothing could possibly be more sublime than its melodious tones resounding amidst the "dim religious light" of the old gothic church, when

> "Through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,
> The pealing anthem swells the note of praise."

In the church of St. Sauveur, Rue des Prêtres, there is a painting of the "Descent from the Cross," by Van Hanslaere, one

of the most distinguished living artists of Belgium, and in that of St. Peter, a copy by Van Thulden, from Rubens' picture of the Triumph of Truth over Luther and Calvin, who are represented in the agonies of annihilation, trampled underfoot by the rampant followers of Truth, who are pursuing their disciples in all directions. In the foreground, a lion is introduced allegorically, pawing a wolf whom he has just strangled, emblematic, no doubt, of the fall of heresy under the hands of the church.

We drove to the village of Gavre, about ten miles from Ghent, to dine at the villa of M. Grenier, a very splendid house recently erected upon one of the very few elevated points, for it cannot be called a hill, which are to be found in Flanders, and which, from the vast level plain over which it rises, commands a most enchanting view; the ancient town of Audenarde lying immediatetely in front, and the "lazy Scheldt" winding its devious way amidst innumerable hamlets, woods and villages as far as the eye could reach.

It was at Gavre, that the Duke of Marlborough encamped on his triumphal march from Ramillies, where, after taking all the intervening cities and strong-holds of Flanders, together with Audenarde and Ghent, almost in the space of a week, he addresses thence to the Duchess the remarkable letter, in which he says, "so many towns have submitted since the battle, that it really looks more like a dream than truth," and in another place, he says, "I am so persuaded that this campaign will give us a good peace, that I beg of you to do all you can that our house at Woodstock may be carried up as much as possible, that I may have a prospect of living in it."

It was the fête of some saint in the villages through which we drove, and every country inn seemed full of enjoyment; tents filled with dancers, and parties engaged in athletic games before the doors. In one place a considerable crowd were assembled round the maypole to shoot with the bow at the popinjay. This is a favourite exercise of the Flemings, who are exceedingly

expert in it, the company which we passed, was composed indifferently of the gentry and peasants, who seemed to enter into it with equal spirit. At Ghent, there is an association for the purpose of practising the use of the bow, called the Confrères de Saint George, a relic of the time when every district of Flanders had a similar society, all which used to meet at Ghent to contend for the prize, and the successful town caused a mass to be celebrated in honour of the victor, and gave to the poor the scarlet cloaks, laced with gold, which had been worn as the costume of the day.

The roads through this part of Belgium are made like those of France, with a raised pavé in the centre only, a custom enforced, in a great part, by the great expense of bringing stones from a distance for their construction; scarcely any being to be found in Flanders or the west. The bye-roads being all across sand, unconsolidated in any way, are all but impassable.

The Belgian hour for dinner is equally early with that of the tables-d'hôte, being

from two to three or four o'clock, and as there is no prolonged sitting for wine afterwards, the entertainment ends before we in England think of dressing for dinner. The cuisine at M. Grenier's was altogether French, including, however, some dishes peculiarly Flemish, amongst others, the large smoked ham, which is an invariable accompaniment at every table throughout Belgium, and seems to be in as high estimation now, as when Rome was supplied with them by the ancient Menapii of the Ardennes; it comes to table decorated by a chased silver handle screwed on to the shank bone, to avoid using the fork in carving it. Another national dish was the *hareng frais*, herring pickled like anchovies, and used like them without further cooking: it is, however, equally common in Holland, where the fishery is of high importance—in Belgium it is rapidly declining.

The style of everything in M. Grenier's establishment, and in those of the same rank where we had the honour to visit, was essentially French, his family having

been educated in Paris, and the conversation was of course in French, although every one at table seemed to understand English perfectly. Flemish is spoken only by the peasantry and the working classes. The account given of it as a dialect was, that "Dutch is bad German, and Flemish bad Dutch." It is, however, by no means inharmonious, and in point of antiquity, I was told by Count d'Hane, that the earliest printed comedy in Europe still exists in Flemish. A stroll in the grounds after dinner, and music and singing on our return to the drawing-room concluded an exceedingly agreeable evening, and we returned early to Ghent.

10 September, 1840.

We had, this morning, a visit from Count d'Hane, a member of the "senate," the elective House of Peers for Belgium, to which he is returned for the district of Alost. The Count is a younger brother of the most distinguished family of Ghent, and head of the educational section of the legis-

lature, besides being an ardent amateur of agriculture. He is married to the only daughter of M. de Potter (not the de Potter of the Revolution, however) and in conformity to the Flemish usage, has appended the name of that family to his own. We drove along with him to the house of his mother, the Dowager Countess d'Hane de Steenhausen, in the Rue des Champs, the most splendid mansion in the city, built in the style of Louis XIV, and containing a collection of choice pictures of the Dutch school. The dining-room is a superb saloon with mirrored walls, an inlaid parquet and richly painted ceiling: the latter, however, is torn down in many places, the soldiers of the French revolutionary army having thrust their sabres through it in 1794, in the hope of finding gold concealed between it and the floor above, an outrage, the traces of which the owners have never removed. It was in these apartments that the late Count received the Emperor Alexander on his return from England after the Peace of Paris, and the same suite of rooms

were subsequently the residence of Louis XVIII, who fled hither during the Hundred Days, and remained till the events of 1815, restored him to his throne.

A few doors distant in the same street, we visited the gallery of M. Schamps which had long been regarded as one of the lions of Ghent. It has since been dispersed and sold. When we saw it, it was numbered and catalogued, and the rooms filled with dealers from all parts of Europe, inspecting their intended purchases previous to the auction, which was to take place a few days after. The gentleman by whom it was originally collected is but recently dead, and its dispersion now was attributed, we were told, partly to impatience of the present proprietor, at having his retirement perpetually invaded by travellers to see his pictures, and partly by the operation of the law against primogeniture, which rendered its sale indispensable, in order to a more equal partition of the family estates.

Count d'Hane did us the favour to conduct us over the buildings of the University,

one of the many valuable institutions for which Belgium is indebted to the munificence of the King of Holland. It was founded by him in 1816, and thrown open for the reception of students in 1826; an inscription upon the portico records the event, *Auspice Gulielmo I. Acad. Conditore, posuit, S. P. Q. G.* DCCCXXVI. the initials in the usual magniloquence of the low countries, represent the Senatus Populus Que Gandavensis!

The buildings from a design of Roelandt, an artist of Nieuport, are in a style of chaste Corinthian architecture, the portico ornamented with sculpture in alto relievo, the vestibule superbly flagged in a mosaic of colored marbles, and the hall and staircase ornamented with busts and caryatides in white marble. The theatres are on a magnificent scale, richly furnished and lighted by lofty lanterns in the vaults of the roof. The course of education, besides most extensive primary schools, comprises the faculties of law, medicine and divinity, with science and belles-lettres, and the number of

students is between 300 and 400 attending the classes of thirty professors. There is attached to the University a library of sixty thousand volumes, a collection of philosophical apparatus of great value, and museums of antiquities, natural history, mineralogy and comparative anatomy, and the whole institution having been recently remodelled and placed under the care of a vigilant and anxious committee, it promises to be one of the most important and beneficial foundations in the kingdom.

The entire system of primary education, however, is in anything but a satisfactory position in Belgium. Under the regence of Holland, the Dutch system of national education was imparted to Belgium. Schools were established in every district, under the superintendance of provincial committees, instruction was supplied gratuitously, and the children of the poor were required to avail themselves of it, whilst to secure its efficiency, no teacher was allowed to be employed who had not undergone a thorough

examination, and been furnished with a diploma of competency.

This feature of the government was from the first vehemently opposed by the Belgian clergy, who saw in it an encroachment upon the right claimed by the Catholic Church to regulate the quantity as well as the quality of national education, and when in 1830, they succeeded in effecting the "repeal of the Union," between the two countries, the entire system was abolished at one fell swoop.*

Education, like every thing else, was declared to be free, and the new government did away with all official supervision of schools, and the necessity for any enquiry into the competency of teachers. The result of this has been, that although the number of schools has not been diminished, the nature of the instruction and the qualification of the teacher, is of so very low a description, as to be thus characterised in

* The 17th article of the *Constitution Belge*, contains the following pithy enactment as to national education. "L'Enseignement *est libre*, toute mesure préventive est interdite."

a modern work upon the subject, by M. Ducpetiaux,* himself, a distinguished Belgian, and intimately acquainted with the subject.

" Instruction in our schools is generally faulty and incomplete, and little merits the praise which has been bestowed upon it. *The best thing that can be said in its favour is, that it is better than no instruction at all,* and that it is more satisfactory to see children sitting on the benches of a school, even although they be doing nothing to the purpose, than to behold them working mischief on the streets. They are taught to read, write, and figure a little; *to teach them less is scarcely possible.* We speak here of primary schools in general, and affirm that those who attribute a moralising influence to the majority of these schools, deceive themselves in a manner the most strange

* " *Quelques mots sur l'état actuel de l'instruction primaire en Belgique, et sur la nécessité de l'améliorer.*"

See also a clever paper by R. W. Rawson, Esq. in the Quarterly Journal of the Statistical Society of London, vol. 2, p. 385.

and prejudicial to the interest of the class whose children are the pupils in these seminaries. A degree of instruction so limited, so meagre, is nearly equivalent to none whatever; and it is impossible that things should be in a better case, seeing that the education of the *teachers* themselves is of the most imperfect kind. Barely do these persons know the little which they undertake to impart, and they have, generally speaking, the most superficial notions of those methods of instilling knowledge, which they impudently attempt to apply in the case of those only a little more ignorant than themselves."

The experiment of education on both systems has now had an ample trial in Belgium; first in fifteen years of government protection, and now in ten years of "free trade." The result has been a convincing failure, and those most clamorous for the latter system in 1830, are now the most urgent in their demands to revert to the former. The provincial deputations, in their reports, recommend the same

course, and the legislature have so far subscribed to their views, as to propose a projet de loi for carrying them into effect, by restoring a modification of the system, as before the revolution.

We dined with Count d'Hane at three o'clock in the afternoon, and as usual, the party broke up between seven and eight o'clock.

NOTE.—As the comparative cost of machinery in Belgium, and in England, is a matter of much interest at the present moment, a list of the prices of that manufactured at Ghent, with the English charges for the same articles, contrasted with each item, will be found in the Appendix No. I.

CHAPTER IV.

GHENT AND COURTRAI

The market-day at Ghent — The peasants — The linen-market—The Book-stalls—*Courtrai*—The Lys—*Denys*—Distillation in Belgium—AGRICULTURE IN FLANDERS—A Flemish farm—Anecdote of Chaptal and Napoleon—Trade in manure—*The Smoor-Hoop*—Rotation of crops—CULTIVATION OF FLAX — Real importance of the crop in Belgium — Disadvantageous position of Great Britain as regards the growth of flax—State of her importations from abroad and her dependency upon Belgium—In the power of Great Britain to relieve herself effectually — System in Flanders — *The seed*—Singular fact as to the Dutch seed—Rotation of crops — Spade labour—Extraordinary care and precaution in *weeding*—*Pulling*—THE ROUISSAGE—In Hainault—In the Pays de Waes—At Courtrai—The process in Holland—The process in the Lys—*A Bleach-green*—The damask manufacture in Belgium—A manufactory in a windmill—Introduction of the use of *sabots* into Ireland—*Courtrai*, the town—Antiquities—The Church of Notre Dame—Relic of Thomas à Becket—THE MAISON DE FORCE AT GHENT—The System of prison discipline—Labour of the

inmates—Their earnings—Remarkable story of Pierre Joseph Soëte—Melancholy case of an English prisoner —*A sugar refinery*—State of the trade in Belgium—Curious frauds committed under the recent law—*Beet-root sugar*—Failure of the manufacture—A tumult at Ghent—*The New Theatre*—Cultivation of music at Ghent —Print works of M. Desmet de Naeyer—Effects of the Revolution of 1830 upon the manufactures of Belgium—Opposition of Ghent and Antwerp to a separation from Holland—M. Bnavionne's exposé of the ruin of the trade in calico printing—Smuggling across the frontiers —Present discontents at Ghent—Number of insolvents in 1839—General decline of her manufactures.

This being the market day for linen, we went early to the Marché de Vendredi where it is held. The winter, however, is the season in which the market is seen to the greatest advantage, as the farmers are not then prevented by their agricultural employments from attending to the weaving, and bringing of it to town for sale in December and January; so many as 2000 pieces have been sold in the course of a morning. The appearance of the peasantry was particularly prepossessing, their features handsome, their dress and person neat in the extreme; the women generally wearing long

cloaks, made of printed calico, and the men the blouse of blue linen, which has become almost the national costume of Belgium.

The sellers of linen were arranged in long lines, each with his webs before him resting on a low bench, whilst the police were present to preserve order, and see that every individual kept his allotted place. The webs had all previously been examined by a public officer, who affixed his seal to each, not as any mark of its quality or guide to its price, but merely to testify that it was not fraudulently made up—that it was of the same quality throughout as on the outer fold, and that the quantity was exactly what it professed to be; any fraud attempted, in any particular, exposing the offender to the seizure and forfeiture of the web.*

The other articles for sale in the market

* The linen which we saw was of low quality, coarse and strong, and by no means cheap. It consisted of sheeting, for export to the Havannah, which, for five quarter's wide, was sold at one shilling a yard.

were vegetables and fruit of the ordinary kinds, (with a profusion of Mirabelle plums, the trees of which we saw, repeatedly, planted in hedge-rows) woollen cloth, cutlery, household furniture, and pottery of a very rude description, together with numerous stalls of books. The latter were chiefly religious, but amongst the others were a number of the old popular histories, which seem to be equally favourites in England and Flanders, such as "*Reynaert den Vos;*"—"*deschoone historie van Fortunatus borsen;*"—"*de schoone historie van den edelen Jan van Parys;*"—"*de Twee gebroders en vroome riddens Valentyn en Oursen den Wilden men;*"—"*Recretiven Droomboek.*" &c., &c.

After breakfast we went by the railroad to Courtrai, a distance which the train accomplishes in a little more than two hours. My object, in the excursion, was to see the process, which is peculiar to this district, of steeping flax in the running waters of the Lys. This river, which rises in the Pays de Calais, and forms one of the boundaries between France and Belgium, derives its

name, in all probability, from the quantity of water-lilies which flourish in its sluggish current, and which are said to be the origin of the fleur-de-lys in the royal arms of France. The road passes through Denys, Waereghem and Haerlebeke, three towns which are the chief in Communes of the same name, and are all bustling little places, combining with agricultural industry, a considerable trade in linen which is the great staple of the district. At Denys, there are also extensive distilleries of Geneva which enjoys a considerable reputation in Belgium, where the spirit produced by distillation is invariably bad, except in the provinces of Limbourg and Luxembourg, where it approaches somewhat to the character of the Dutch. This remarkable difference between the produce of two countries, so similar in almost all their resources for the manufacture, is, perhaps, to be found in the almost total absence of any duty of excise upon distillation, which it was found essential to reduce to a mere nominal sum since 1830, in order to protect the agricul-

ture of Belgium, and which, consequently, brought the trade into the hands of the very lowest class, both of distillers and consumers.

The entire surface of the country, between Ghent and Courtrai, is one unbroken plain, which, though less rich and luxuriant than the alluvial soils of Holland and of England, exhibits, in all directions, the most astonishing evidence of that superiority in agricultural science for which the Flemings are renowned over Europe. The natural reluctance of their thin and sandy soil has been overcome by dint of the most untiring labour—an attention to manuring, which approaches to the ludicrous in its details, and, above all, by a system of rotation, the most profoundly calculated and the most eminently successful.

The general aspect of a Flemish farm; the absence of hedge-rows, or, where they are to be found, their elaborate training and inter-texture, so as to present merely a narrow vegetating surface of some two or three feet high, and twice as many inches in

thickness ; the minute division of their fields into squares, all bearing different crops, but performing the same circle of rotation, and the total disappearance of all weeds or plants, other than those sought to be raised ; all these show the practical and laborious experience, by which they have reduced their science to its present system, and the indomitable industry by which, almost inch by inch, these vast and arid plains have been converted from blowing sands into blooming gardens. Here draining and irrigation are each seen in their highest perfection, owing to the frequent intersection of canals ; whilst the same circumstance, affording the best facilities for the transport of manure, has been one of the most active promoters of farming improvement. Chaptal relates, that having traversed one of the sandy plains of Flanders in company with Napoleon, the Emperor, on his return to Paris, adverted to the circumstance of its gloomy barrenness with an expression of surprise as well as regret, when the practical philosopher suggested,

that the construction of a canal across it would, within five years, convert the unproductive waste into luxuriant farms. The experiment was tried, and proved triumphantly successful. The canal was opened, and in less than the time predicted, the results anticipated were more than realized in its effects.

To fix the flying sands of Belgium, the main and permanent expedient has been the application of manures; the preparation and care of this important ingredient has been, in Flanders, reduced to an actual trade, and barges innumerable are in constant transit on the canals, conveying it from its depôts and manufactories in the villages and towns to the rural districts, where it is to be applied. Servants, as a perquisite, are allowed a price for all the materials serviceable for preparing it, which they can collect in the house and farm-yards, and the value of which often amounts to as much as their nominal wages. Pits and a tank, called a *smoor-hoop*, or smothering heap, are attached to every farm, and tended

with a systematic care that bespeaks the importance of their contents. Into these, every fermentable fluid is discharged, and mixed with the refuse of vegetables; the rape-cake which remains after expressing the oil, wood-ashes, soaper's waste, grains from distilleries, weeds from the drains, and, in short, every other convertible article collected in the establishment; and often, in addition, plants such as broom are sown in the lands, expressly for the purpose of being ploughed in when green to increase their fertility, or to be cut for fermentation in the *smoor-hoop*. This latter is constructed with bricks, like a tan-pit, and covered with cement to avoid escape or filtration; and its contents, at the larger establishments, are sold to the farmers at from three to five francs a hogshead, in proportion to the quality.

The circle of rotation is observed with equal precision and scientific skill, and generally consists of four or five crops and a clean fallow, but varies, of course, according to the nature of the soil and the articles in

demand. The season was too advanced for us to see the majority of the crops upon the ground, the grain being mostly housed; but those which were still in the field were of the most luxuriant quality. Pasturage, there was comparatively little; but clover, the chef-d'œuvre of Flemish husbandry, whence it was introduced into England, we saw in high perfection. Some plants which are not usual in Great Britain were to be seen in great abundance; large fields of tobacco, hemp, colza or rape-seed, which is largely sown for crushing, buck-wheat or *sarrasin*, (probably another importation of the Crusaders) from which they make a rich and nutritious bread. Beans and feeding crops, especially carrots, which the sandy lands produce luxuriantly, and turnips, appeared to be favourites especially near the villages.

But the important article, and that which I was most desirous to see, was the *flax*, which, however, had been almost all pulled before my visit, so that I could only see the *rouissage* or process of watering — which, in the district around Courtrai, is performed in a manner almost peculiar to themselves;

indeed, I may say altogether so, so far as success is concerned; for although the same practice prevails in the Department du Nord, in France, in the vicinity of St. Amand and Valenciennes, it is with a much less satisfactory result: and in Russia, where it is practised to some extent, the flax produced is, in every way, of inferior quality. It seems, in fact, to be a question whether, in addition to the slow and deep current of the Lys, and its remarkable freedom from all impurity, it be not possessed of some peculiar chemical qualities, which account for its efficiency for this purpose, whilst identically the same process utterly fails in other streams with no perceptible difference in the quality of their waters.

It is impossible to over estimate the importance to Great Britain of such an immediate improvement in the process of flax cultivation at home, as will place her on an equality with her rivals abroad. At present, it is an incontrovertible and uneasy fact, that with her trade in yarn and linen hourly encreasing, she is in the same

proportion becoming more and more dependant upon foreign countries for the supply of the raw material. The cultivation of flax in England, is, in all probability, diminishing in amount, whilst year after year, our imports from Holland, Belgium and Prussia, are rising in a remarkable manner. Only look to the following facts. The great increase in our manufacture of linen yarn, both in England, Scotland and Ireland has taken place, since the year 1820; we then imported largely from the continent, and spun only for our own weavers at home, we have since then ceased to import yarn spun by machinery altogether, except a very small portion of the very finest for cambrics; and actually export to France, and elsewhere, to the value of £746,000 per annum. Our exports of British and Irish linen have increased in the mean time, from 36,522,333 yards in 1820, to 60,954,697 in 1833, and 77,195,894 yards in 1838, and what has been the case as regards the importation of flax? The import duty upon foreign flax, both dressed and undressed, was at the commencement

of this period, £10. 14*s*. 6*d*. per cwt.; as our manufacture increased, and our home supply fell short, that duty was, in 1825, reduced to *four pence;* when the import increased from 376,170 cwt. to 1,018,837 cwt. In the year following, the necessity still becoming more pressing, and no relief arising from home, it was further reduced to *three pence;* the year following to *two pence*, and in 1828 to *one penny*. The importation, all this time, has been going on steadily increasing, showing an average on the five years, from 1830 to 1835, of 751,331 cwt., and amounting, by the last printed returns of the House of Commons, for 1838, to 1,626,276 cwt.* It is manifest, that a trade so valuable to us as our linen manufacture, can never be said to be safe, so long as we are thus dependant for the very means of its support upon those whose manifest advantage it is to destroy it.

In order to remedy this evil, it seems to

* This latter quantity is found in the tables published by the Board of Trade, under the head of "Flax, Tow, or Codilla of Hemp and Tow." The importation of "undressed hemp" is under another head, and amounts to 730,375 cwt.

me; to require only a vigorous exertion on behalf of our own farmers, and those whose direct interest it is to give them encouragement to lead to such an improvement in our process of cultivation and dressing, as would speedily render our flax of equal quality with that of our rivals in the Low Countries; we may thus safely rely on its augmented value in the market, to ensure its production in sufficient quantity to meet our demands, and relieve us altogether from a dependance upon foreigners. For the landed proprietor and the farmer, not less than the manufacturer, there is a mine of unwrought wealth to be secured in this important article, and my earnestness upon this point arises from the fact that from all I have seen myself, or can possibly learn from others, the field is equally open to England as to the Netherlands—she obtains the seed from the same quarter, her soil and her climate are equally suitable; the plant up to a certain stage, is as healthy and promising with us, as with them, but there the parallel ceases, and in

all the subsequent processes, the superior system of the Belgian gives him a golden advantage over us. Still notwithstanding all our disadvantages, Irish flax, for the strong articles, to which alone it is suited, produces a firmer, and in every respect, a better thread than Flemish or Dutch of the same character.

One source of superiority which the farmer of Holland and the Netherlands enjoys, is derived from the fact of his *saving the seed* of his own flax. In the first instance, he imports, as we do from Riga, seed which yields a strong and robust plant, during the first year; its produce is then preserved and sown a second time, when it becomes more delicate in its texture, and the seed then obtained, is *never parted with* by the farmer, but produces the finest and most valuable plant. As this, however, in time deteriorates, it is necessary to keep up a constant succession by annual importation of northern seed, which in turn become acclimated, refined, and are superseded by the next in rotation. The sagacious

Hollander thus obtains for himself a seed for his own peculiar uses, of twice the value of any which he exports ; an advantage of which England cannot expect to avail herself, till the process of saving the flax-seed for herself, becomes more generally introduced, instead of annually importing upwards of 3,300,000 bushels, as we do at present.

In Flanders, where the cultivation is so all important, the *rotation* of all other crops, is regulated with ultimate reference to the flax, which comes into the circle only once in seven years, and in some instances, once in nine, whilst, as it approaches the period for saving it, each antecedent crop is put in with a double portion of manure. For itself, the preparation is most studiously and scrupulously minute, the ground is prepared rather like a flower-bed than a field, and *spade labour* always preferred to the coarser and less minute operation of the plough, every film of a weed is carefully uprooted, and the earth abundantly supplied, generally with liquid manure, fermented with rape

cake. The seed is then sown remarkably *thick*, so that the plants may not only support one another, but struggling upwards to the light, may throw out few branches, and rise into a taller and more delicate stem. The *weeding* is done, whilst the plant is still so tender and elastic as that it may rise again readily after the operation, and it is a remarkable illustration of the studied tenderness with which the cultivation is watched, that the women and children who are employed to weed it, are generally instructed to do so against the wind, in order that the breeze may lift the stems as soon as they have left them, instead of allowing them to grow crooked, by lying too long upon the ground. Again, in order to give it a healthy support during its growth, *stakes* are driven into the ground at equal distances, from the top of which, cords, or thin rods are extended, dividing the field into minute squares, and thus preventing the plants from being laid down by any but a very severe wind.

The time of *pulling* depends upon

whether the farmer places most value upon the seed or the fibre of the particular field. If the former, he must wait till the plant is thoroughly ripe, its capsules hard, its leaves fallen, and its stem yellow; but in this case, the stalk is woody and the fibre coarse and hard; whereas, if the fineness of the fibre be the first object, it is pulled whilst the stalk is still green and tender, and before the fruit has come to maturity. At Courtrai and its vicinity, the flax when severed from the ground, after being carefully sunned and dried, is stored for twelve-months before it is submitted to the process of watering. In the Pays de Waes, however, this practice does not obtain, the steeping taking place immediately on its being pulled, and I find the inclination of opinion to be in favour of the latter mode, as the former is said to render the flax harsh and discolored, whilst that immersed at once is soft and silky, and of a delicate and uniform tint.

It is remarkable that although the process of *rouissage* or watering is felt to be

one of the utmost nicety and importance, the ultimate value of the flax being mainly dependent upon it, no uniform system prevails throughout the various provinces of Belgium. In Hainault and around Namur, where an impression is held that the effluvia of the flax, whilst undergoing the *rouissage*, is injurious to health, it is interdicted by the police, and it is consequently dew-riped, simply by spreading it upon the grass, and turning it from time to time, till the mucilaginous matter, by which the fibre is retained around the stem, is sufficiently decomposed to permit of its being readily separated from the wood. In the Pays de Waes, the flax is steeped in still water as in Ireland, except that in the latter country, a small stream is contrived, if possible, to pass in and out of the pit during the process.* The system of the Pays de Waes

* It is curious that this process which all concur in representing to be one requiring the utmost cleanliness and purity, should of all places be performed in Holland with an utter neglect of both. In an able document by Mr. Acton, in the Quarterly Journal of Agriculture for 1832,

is that which has met with the most decided approbation in Belgium ; it is recommended officially to the farmers in the instructions published by the Société Linière, an association instituted for the purpose of promoting the cultivation of flax, and its various manufactures.* The

he gives the following account of the operation. "The mode of watering flax in Holland, and in the low lands of Belgium and France, is to put a dam across the canal, clean out the weeds and mud for a few yards next the dam, lay in three or four rows of sheaves of flax next the dam, and then covering these six inches deep with the rank herbage that grows in the canal, and the mud raked up from its bottom. A few more courses of sheaves are next placed in the same way as the first, and covered in the same way with weeds and mud, till the whole is put in steep. These fosses, and the mode of placing the flax in them, are as they ought to be, but the propriety of dragging up so much mud or slime from the bottom of the canals, to cover the sheaves, six inches deep, may well be doubted, it cannot fail to besmear the lint so much, as to render it so nasty, that it would require to be much rinsed and washed in the water to remove the mud. This not only creates labour, by no means the most agreeable, but must greatly injure the flax by ruffling it in the water, a thing that ought to be avoided. —Vol. iv. p. 174.

* This important association has been for some years in operation, and amongst its functions has sent several commissioners into other countries to ascertain the relative

system at Courtrai, consists in immersing the flax, after being dried and stored for twelvemonths, in the running water of the Lys; an operation, which in their hands, is performed with the utmost nicety and precision, and for which it is so renowned that the crops for many miles, even so far as Tournai, are sent to the Lys to undergo the *rouissage*.

The flax, tied up in small bundles, is placed perpendicularly in wooden frames of from twelve to fifteen feet square, and being launched into the river, straw and clean stones are laid upon it till it sinks just so far below the surface of the stream as

value of their various processes. The result of these inquiries, they have condensed into a short manual for the use of the farmers and others engaged in the trade in Flanders; in order to confine it to whom it has been written and printed in Flemish. A copy of this valuable document translated into French, for which I am indebted to a particular source, I have placed in the appendix to these volumes. Knowing it as I do, to be the genuine and anxious suggestions of the best practical men in Belgium, it may be regarded as a faithful guide to their process, and would be well deserving of extensive circulation in the flax districts of Great Britain and Ireland.

to leave a current both above and below it, which carries away all impurities, and keeps the fibre clean and sweet during the period of immersion. This continues for seven or eight days, according to the heat of the weather and the temperature of the water, and so soon as the requisite change has taken place in the plant, the frames are hauled on shore, and the flax spread out upon the grass to sun and dry it previously to its being removed to undergo the further processes. The *rouissage* at Courtrai is usually performed in May, and again in the months of August and September; after which the flax merchants of Brabant and the north send their agents amongst the farmers, who purchase from house to house, and, on a certain day, attend at the chief town of the district to receive the "deliveries," when the qualities of the crop and the average prices are ascertained and promulgated for the guidance of the trade.

From the flax grounds which lie close by Courtrai, on the right bank of the Lys,

we crossed the river to the bleach-green on the opposite side of the river, and if we might judge from the extent of the buildings, which were not larger than a good barn, the process must be a very simple one in Flanders, or the employment very limited at Courtrai. The most important establishments of this kind, however, are at Antwerp, Brussels and Tournai.

The cloth on the grass was principally diaper made on the spot and at Ypres (whence it derives its name, *d'Ypres*,) but it was coarse, and the designs ordinary and inartificial. The manufacture of the article in which Belgium formerly excelled so much as to supply the imperial household during the reign of Napoleon, was ruined by his fall and the breaking up of the continental system. At one time not less than 3000 workmen were employed in this branch alone, but the separation of Belgium from France in 1815, and the simultaneous imposition of an almost prohibitory duty on her damask has reduced the trade to a mere cypher, not above three hundred

workmen being now employed at Courtrai, the great seat of the manufacture.

Close by the bleach-green, we entered a windmill for grinding bark, and at a short distance from it, another of the same primitive edifices was at full work, crushing rape oil. I never saw such a miniature manufactory — in one little apartment, about ten feet square, the entire process was carried on to the extent of a ton of seed, yielding about thirty-six gallons of oil per day. In one corner, the seed was being ground between a pair of millstones; in another, pounded in mortars by heavy beams shod with iron, which were raised and fell by the motion of the wind; the material was then roasted in an iron pan over a charcoal fire, till the oil became disengaged by the heat, and was then crushed by being inclosed in canvas bags enveloped in leather cases, and placed in grooves, into which huge wooden wedges were driven by the force of the machinery; the last drop of oil was thus forced out by a repetition of the

process, and the residue of the seed which came forth in cakes as flat and as hard as a stone, were laid on one side to be sold for manure and other purposes.

A manufactory of *sabots* was attached to the back mill, and sold for five-pence and six-pence a pair for the largest size, and half that amount for those suited to children. Surely the introduction of these wooden shoes would be a great accession to the comforts of the Irish peasantry, as well as a new branch of employment in their manufacture. An expert Flemish workman can finish a pair within an hour, and with care they will last for three months. Four pair of thick woollen socks to be worn along with them costs eighteen-pence, so that for four shillings, a poor man might be dry and comfortably shod for twelve months. In winter, especially, and in wet weather, or when working in moist ground, they are infinitely to be preferred, and although the shape may be clumsy, (though in this respect, the Flemish are superior to the French), it is, at least, as graceful as

the half-naked foot and clouted shoe of the Irish labourer. I doubt much, however, whether the people, though ever so satisfied of their advantages, would get over their associaton of "arbitrary power and brass money" with the use of "wooden shoes."

Courtrai itself is a straggling, cheerless-looking town, and possesses few objects of any interest. Outside the gate is the field on which was fought the Battle of the Golden Spurs in 1302, and a little chapel still marks the spot which was the centre of the action. Its large market for flax and linen has made its name familiar abroad, but it has little within itself to detain a stranger in search of the picturesque. Its only antique buildings are the Town Hall and the church of Notre-Dame, the former contains two richly carved mantel-pieces, evidently of very remote date. The latter was built by Count Baldwin, who was chosen Emperor at Constantinople in the fourth Crusade, and contains, amidst a host of worthless pictures,

a Descent from the Cross, by Vandyck. Amongst the curiosities in the sacristy, is a sacerdotal dress of Thomas a'Becket, of most ample dimensions, which the saint left behind him on returning to England after his reconciliation with Henry II. At either extremity of the bridge which crosses the Lys in the centre of the town are two vast circular towers, called the *Broellen Torren* which were built in the fifteenth century, and still serve as the town prisons. The chief support of the town is still derived from its linen weaving, which unlike the usual practice in Belgium, is done in large factories, at which the workmen attend as in England. The production of linen of all kinds at Courtrai is about 30,000 pieces a year. There is also a considerable manufactory of thread.

We this morning accompanied Count d'Hane to visit the celebrated prison of Ghent, the *maison de force*, which received the applause of Howard himself, and has been

the model for most of the improved penitentiaries of Europe. It was erected in 1774, under the auspices of Maria Theresa, whilst the Spanish Netherlands were still attached to the House of Austria, and for its present state of completion and perfected system, it is indebted to the care and munificence of the late King, William I. of Holland. It, at present, incloses upwards of 1,100 prisoners, divided and classified into various wards, and employed in various occupations according to the nature of their crimes and the term of their punishment. Of these, two hundred were condemned to perpetual labour, and one to solitary confinement for life, the remainder for temporary periods.

In Ghent there has not been more than *three* capital executions since the year 1824, and as Belgium has no colonies to which to transport her secondary offenders, they are condemned to imprisonment in all its forms in proportion to the atrocity of their crimes.

Labour enters into the system in all its

modifications, and as the rations of food supplied to the prisoners are so calculated as to be barely adequate to sustain life, they are thus compelled, by the produce of their own hands, to contribute to their own support. According to the nature of their offences, the proportion of their earnings which they receive is more or less liberal; they are separated into three classes:—1st. The *condamnés aux travaux forcés*, who receive but three tenths of their own gains; 2nd. the *condamnés à la réclusion*, who receive four tenths; and 3rd. the *condamnés correctionellement*, who receive one half. The amount of these wages may be seen to be but small, when the sum paid for making seven pair of *sabots*, or seven hours' labour, is but one penny. Of the sum allotted to him, the criminal receives but one half immediately, with which he is allowed to buy bread, coffee, and some other articles at a canteen established within the prison, under strict regulations, and the other moiety is deposited for his benefit in the savings' bank of the jail, to be paid to him with interest

on his enlargement. A prisoner, notwithstanding his small wages, may, after seven years' confinement, have amassed one hundred and twenty francs exclusive of interest.

The labour of the prison consists, in the first place, of all the domestic work of the establishment, its cleansing, painting and repairs, its cooking, and the manufacture of every article worn by the inmates; and secondly, of yarn spinning, weaving and making shirts for the little navy of Belgium,* and drawers for the soldiers, together with other similar articles suited for public sale. Prisoners who have learned no trade, are permitted to make their choice, and are taught one. The cleanliness of every corner is really incredible, and such are its effects upon the health of the inmates, that the deaths, on an average, do not exceed, annually, one in a hundred. After paying all its expenses of every description, the profits of the labour done in

* It consists, I believe, of about thirteen sail of small vessels.

the prison leaves a surplus to the government, annually, to an amount which I do not precisely remember, but which is something considerable.

Amongst the prisoners, one very old man was pointed out to me, named Pierre Joseph Soëte, seventy-nine years of age, sixty-two of which he had spent within the walls of this sad abode. He was condemned, at the age of seventeen, for an atrocious offence; in a fit of jealousy, he had murdered a girl, to whom he was about to have been married, by tying her to a tree and strangling her. He entered the jail when a boy, and had grown to manhood and old age within its melancholy walls; and the tenor of his life, I was told, had been uniformly mild and inoffensive. Five years since, the father of our friend, Count D'Hane, who was then Governor of Ghent, had represented the story to King Leopold, and the unfortunate old man was set at liberty; but in a few weeks, he presented himself at the door of the prison, and begged to be permitted to enter it again, and to die

there as he had lived. I asked him why he had taken this extraordinary resolution, and he told me that the world had nothing to detain him; he had no longer a relative or a living face within it that he knew; he had no home, no means of support, no handicraft by which to earn it, and no strength to beg, what could he do, but return to the only familiar spot he knew, and the only one that had any charms for him! Poor creature! his extraordinary story, and his long life of expiation, rendered it impossible to remember or resent his early crime, and yet I could not look at such a singular being without a shudder.

Another, but a still more melancholy case, was pointed out to me. I asked the physician, Dr. Maresca, if there were any foreigners in the jail, and he told me there were several from Germany and France; and one, an Englishman, who had been confined some years before for an attempt at fraud, and who, between chagrin and disease, was now dying in the hospital. I went to see him, and found him in bed

in the last feeble stage of consumption. His story was a very sad one—his name was Clarke, he seemed about thirty-five or thirty-six years of age, and had come over with his wife to seek for work as a machine maker at one of the engine factories in Ghent. He was disappointed—he could get no adequate employment—he saw his young wife and his little children perishing from hunger in a strange land, and, in an evil hour, he forged a document for some trifling sum to procure them bread. He was detected, tried and condemned to five years' imprisonment in the *maison de force*. What became of his family he no longer knew; they had, perhaps, returned to England, but he could not tell. The physician told me that his conduct had all along been most excellent, so much so, that the goverment reduced the term of his imprisonment from five years to four, and he had now but eighteen months to remain. But he was dying, and of a broken heart through sorrow and mortification. The physician had tried to obtain a further re-

duction of his term, but it was not thought prudent at the time to accede to his representations, and now it was too late to renew the application. Dr. M. thought he would now be liberated if the application were repeated, but it was more humane, he said, to leave him as he was, as he had every attention he required; the hospital was comfortable, and the rules of the prison had all been relaxed in his favour, so that he had books and every indulgence granted to him, and a few weeks would soon release him from all his sorrows. Poor fellow! I hardly knew whether he seemed gratified or grieved by our visit; but his situation, surrounded by foreigners, to whose very language he was a stranger, far from home and England, and without a friend or relation to watch his dying bed was a very touching one, and it was rendered, perhaps, more so, by the very sympathy and kindness which seemed to be felt for him by all around him.

On the opposite side of the canal, we visited the sugar refinery of M. Neyt. This

is a trade of much importance to Belgium, and, like almost every other department of her manufactures, at present in a very critical condition. The establishment of M. Neyt, though of great extent, being calculated to work twenty-five tons of sugar in the week, is not greater than some others in Ghent, Antwerp and Brussels. The machinery is all of the newest construction for boiling *in vacuo*, upon Howard's principle, with some recent improvements by, I think, M. Devos-Maes; which, though expensive in the first instance, tends materially to diminish the cost by accelerating the completion of the process.

All the sugar we saw in process was from Java and Manilla, and vessels were loading in the canal in front of the works with purified lump for Hamburgh. This branch of Belgian commerce has been retarded by a series of vicissitudes, and seems still destined to perilous competition, not only from Holland, which already disputes the possession of the trade with her, but from the states of the Prussian League in

which there are eighty-four refineries of sugar already. Holland and Belgium have, for many years, enjoyed a large revenue from this most lucrative process for the supply of Germany and for export to the Mediterranean; a manufacture in which they have been enabled to compete successfully with England, owing to their being at liberty to bring the raw material from any country where it is to be found cheapest, whilst Great Britain has necessarily been restricted to consume only the produce of her own colonies by the protective duty imposed upon all others. Holland has, however, by her recent treaty with Prussia, taken steps to preserve her present advantageous position as regards the supply of Germany, whilst her bounties to her own refiners afford an equal encouragement with that held out by their government to those of Belgium.

The false policy of the system of bounties has, however, operated in Belgium, as it has invariably done elsewhere, to give an unreal air of prosperity to the trade, whilst

it opened a door to fraud, the never failing concomitant of such unsound expedients. To such an extent was this the case, that on its recent detection and suppression, a reaction was produced in the manufacture, that for the moment threatened to be fatal. The duty on the importation of raw sugar amounts to 37 francs per 100 kilogrammes, and a drawback was paid down to 1838 on every 55 kilogrammes of refined sugar exported. This proportion was taken as the probable quantity extractible from 100 kilogrammes of the raw article, but the law omitted to state *in what stage* of refinement, or of what precise quality that quantity should be. The consequence was, that sugar which had undergone but a single process, and still retained a considerable weight of its molasses, was exported, and a drawback was thus paid upon the entire 75 to 80 kilogrammes, which, had the process been completed, would only have been demandable on fifty-five. The encouragement designed to give a stimulus to improvement, thus tended only to give an impulse to fraud, and vast

quantities of half refined sugar were sent across the frontiers, and the drawback paid, only to be smuggled back again for a repetition of the same dishonest proceeding. The attention of the government being, however, awakened by a comparison of the relative quantities of raw sugar imported, and of refined exported, on which the drawback was claimed, a change was made in the law in 1838, by which the drawback was restricted to a per centage on nine tenths only of the raw sugar imported, thus securing a positive revenue upon the balance, and at the same time some practical expedients were adopted for the prevention of fraud for the future. These latter were found to be so effectual, that four establishments in Antwerp discontinued the trade altogether immediately on the new law coming into force, and this example was followed by others elsewhere.

There are still between 60 and 70 refineries in Belgium, and in 1837 and 1838, the importations of raw sugar and the exports of refined were as follows :

RAW SUGAR IMPORTED.

In 1837. 20,128,618 kilogrammes.
In 1838. 16,814,940 kilogrammes.

REFINED SUGAR EXPORTED.

In 1837. 8,484,097 kilogrammes.
In 1838. 8,113,897 kilogrammes.

An amount, which whilst it shows the general importance of the trade, seems to indicate that it is not increasing. The home consumption of Belgium as compared to England, is as 2 kils. per each individual to 8. In France the quantity used per head, is 3 kils. and in the rest of Europe about $2\frac{1}{2}$. But to the Belgians, this export trade is the vital object at the present moment, and any alteration of our law which would permit the import of foreign sugar into England, at a diminished duty, or encourage the growth of beet-root for the manufacture of sugar, would be fatal to the trade of the Netherlands, and to Holland, not less than to Belgium.

In the latter country, the production of

sugar from beet-root, notwithstanding the encouragement given to it by Napoleon, was never very extended nor successful. It disappeared almost entirely in 1814, and was not revived for twenty years, till in 1834, a fresh impulse was given to the Belgians to renew the experiment from witnessing the example of its success in France and some establishments were erected in Brabant and Hainault. But the vast advantages derived by the refiners of foreign sugar from the facility for fraud afforded by the defective state of the law, completely extinguished the attempt. Even now the expense of the process, which renders the cost of the beet-root sugar nearly equal to that extracted from the cane, together with the inferiority for every purpose of the beet-root molasses, holds out but little prospect of its ever becoming a productive department of national manufacture.

On the evening of our arrival, a considerable tumult was excited around the front of the *Hotel de la Poste* where we staid, which we found arose from the eagerness

to obtain admission to the new Theatre, which stands next door to the Hotel, and which was that evening to be opened for the first time. Some soldiers were stationed to keep off the crowd, but as their impatience increased, the orders of the military were but little regarded, till, at length, the struggle came to an open rupture with them, and the officer on guard after going through all the preliminaries of intimidation, expostulation and scolding, at length, fairly lost all temper, and commenced boxing "the leader of the movement!" A ring being made for the combatants, the officer was beaten, and walked off to his quarters, and the pressure of the crowd, being by this time relieved, the spectators hurried into the theatre.

The new building is very magnificent; a new street having been formed to open at a suitable site for it, one side of which it occupies exclusively. The centre of the front, projects in the form of a wide semicircle, so that carriages drive right under the building to set down their company at

the foot of the grand staircase. Besides the theatre itself, there is a suite of halls for concerts, capable of containing two thousand persons, and the entire is finished internally in the style of Louis XIV, with a prodigality of colours, gilding, and ornamental carving that is quite surprising. It is certainly the most beautiful theatre I have seen, as well as one of the most spacious.

The "*spectacle*" and the opera are still amongst those necessaries in the economy of life in Belgium, which late dinner hours and fastidious taste have not as yet interfered with. Ghent has long been eminent for its successful cultivation of music. A few years since, the *chefs d'orchestre* in the four principal theatres in the kingdom were all natives of Ghent, and the names of Verheyen, Ermel and Angelet, all born in the same place, are familiar to every amateur of the science. The *Société de St. Cecile*, a musical association, is the most eminent in the Netherlands, and at a concert at Brussels in 1837, where all the

musicians of the chief cities of the kingdom competed for a prize; the first honours, two golden medals were given by acclamation to those of Ghent.

The print works of M. De Smet de Naeyer are situated in the *Faubourg de Bruges*, and, like almost all in the Netherlands, exhibit no division of labour; the cotton being spun, woven, and printed upon the same premises. In the latter department, their productions are of a very ordinary description, and their designs in a very inferior class of art. The machinery was partly French and partly Belgian, of a cumbrous and antiquated construction, compared with that in use in England; but, as the recent improvements in Great Britain have all been conceived with a view to the speediest and cheapest production to meet a most extensive demand, their introduction into Belgium, where the market is so extremely circumscribed, would only be an augmentation of expense, without any correspondent advantage. The works were idle at the moment of our visit.

This important department of manufacture is reduced to the lowest ebb in Belgium by the effects of the revolution of 1830. Previous to this event, the Belgian calico printer being admitted to the markets of Holland and her colonies, had an outlet for his produce, quite sufficient to afford remunerative employment for all his machinery; but when, by her separation from Holland, Belgium was excluded from the Dutch possessions, both in the East and West Indies, and restricted to the supply of her own population, she suddenly found the number of her consumers reduced from between *fifteen* and *sixteen millions* to something less than *four*. In articles which are universally produced by the unaided labour *of the hand*, a limitation on the gross consumption cannot, as a general rule, effect any very material alteration in the individual price, where fair competition shall have already reduced and adjusted it by a remunerative standard. But when it comes to an active competition *with machinery*, the case is widely different; the outlay for ap-

paratus and the cost of labour being almost the same for the production of one hundred pieces as for ten, it is manifest that the man who has a market for one hundred, can afford to sell each one for a much less sum than he who can only dispose of ten—even without including in the calculation the interest of the capital embarked, which must, of course, be ten times the amount upon the small production that it is upon the large. It is her almost unlimited command of markets, and the vast millions of consumers who must have her produce, in her various colonies and dependencies, that, combined with her matchless machinery, places the manufactures of England almost beyond the reach of rivalry as regards the moderation of their price; and thus gives them, in spite of duties, that, in any other case, would amount to a prohibition, a lucrative introduction into those countries themselves, which are fast acquiring her machinery, but look in vain for her limitless markets.

The merchants of Antwerp and the manufacturers of Ghent, had the good sense,

probably purchased by experience, to recognize this incontrovertible principle, and foreseeing, clearly, the ruin of their pursuits in the results of the Repeal of the Union with Holland, they loudly protested against the proceedings of the revolutionists of 1830.* But, as "madness ruled the hour," their protestations were all unheeded—they were

* On the first out-break of the revolution, the people of Antwerp, strongly opposed to it, sent the following address to the King of Holland. "Sire, it is not without painful sensations that we have been apprised of the demand made to your Majesty, tending to obtain a separation of interests between the southern and northern provinces. The fear that our silence may be interpreted as an adhesion to this proposition, imposes upon us the duty of exposing to your Majesty, that the wish is in no way participated in by us. The experience of fifteen years has proved to us, in the most evident manner, that is to the free and mutual exchange of produce, that we are indebted for reciprocal prosperity. *The advantages that navigation derives from the colonies, the increasing outlets that these same colonies constantly offer to the produce of our industry, are irrefragible proofs, that any separation would not only be fatal to this province, but to the commercial industry of all Belgium.* Intimately persuaded of this great truth, we dare to make it known to your Majesty, with that confidence and respect inspired by a King, who desires the welfare of his people, and who will never labour but in the interest of its well understood prosperity."—*Antwerp, September 13th*, 1830.

overborne by numbers; and, as the patriots of Ireland, in rejecting the advantages held out to them by Great Britain in the celebrated "commercial propositions" of 1785, adopted as their watchword "*perish commerce*, but live the constitution;" so the patriots of Belgium, in their paroxysm of repeal, reproached their less frenzied fellow-countrymen with "allowing the profits on their cottons, or the prices of their iron, to outweigh the independence of their country!" The revolution was accomplished in their defiance, and the ruin of their trade was consummated by the same blow.

With respect to the very branch of manufacture which has led to these observations, the printing of calicoes and woollens, M. Briavionne, an impartial historian, and so far as political inclination is concerned, strongly biassed in favour of the revolution, thus details its immediate effects upon it. After describing the rapid decline of the cotton trade in general, since 1830, he goes on to say, "In the department of printing, the results have not been more satisfactory;

many of the leading establishments of Ghent, and of Brussels have been altogether abandoned, or their buildings dismantled and converted to other purposes, and their utensils and machinery sold off by public auction. Ghent, in 1829, possessed *fifteen* print-works—in 1839 she had but *nine;* in Brussels, at the same time, and in Ardennes and Lierre, there were *eleven* houses of the first rank, of these *six* have since closed their accounts. Other establishments there are, it is true, that have sprung up in the interim, but, in the aggregate, the number is diminished. In prosperous years, the production of Belgium might have amounted, before the revolution, to about 400,000 pieces. Ghent, alone, produced 300,000 in 1829, but its entire production, at present, does not amount to 20,000, nor does that of the largest house in Belgium exceed 45,000 pieces.

"Nor is this to be ascribed to any want of ability in the Belgian mechanics; on the the contrary, they are qualified to undertake the most difficult work, but they can only

employ themselves, of course, when such are in actual demand. They are, in consequence, limited to the production of the most low priced and ordinary articles; fast colours and cheap cloth are all they aspire to. High priced muslins they rarely attempt, and although they have ventured to print upon mousseline-de-laine, they have been forced almost altogether to abandon it. In fact, the double rivalry of France, on the one hand, and England on the other, keeps them in continual alarm, and renders them fearful of the slighest speculation or deviation from their ordinary line of production. France, on the contrary, enters their market relying upon the elegance and originality of her patterns; and England notwithstanding her heavy and unimaginative designs, conceived in inferior taste, still maintains her superiority by means of her masterly execution and the lowness of her price. Thus, whilst French muslins sell readily for from two to three francs an ell, England can offer hers for forty-five centimes, or even less, and those of Belgium

vary from sixty centimes to a franc and a quarter per ell; not only so, but for that which she can now with difficulty dispose of for sixty centimes, she had, thirty-five years ago, an ample demand at two francs and a half.

"This destruction of her home trade by the competition of foreigners, she has sought in vain to retrieve by her shipments abroad; she has exported to Brazil and to the Levant, to the South Sea and Singapore, and finally, she has turned to Germany and the fairs of Francfort-on-the-Maine—in short, she has tried every opening, and found only loss in all. The only market in which she has contrived to hold a footing is that of Holland, and even this is every day slipping from her, although, before the revolution of 1830, it consumed one half of her entire production.

"Belgium has not, like England, manufacturers, who, devoting themselves to the supply of the foreign market alone, and bestowing upon it their undivided study and attention, attain a perfect knowledge

and command of it in its every particular; but here, every printer looks to exportation only as an expedient to get rid of his surplus production, after satisfying the demand of his home consumption. Such a system is pregnant with evils, but it is in vain to attempt its alteration so long as we have England for our rival, with her great experience, her vast command of capital, and her firm possession of the trade."*

The information which I received from M. De Smet, M. Voortman, M. de Hemptine and others, more than confirmed, in its every particular, this deplorable exposé of M. Briavionne. Belgian prints are constantly undersold by from 10 to 15 per cent by English goods, imported legitimately into their market, notwithstanding a duty of a hundred florins upon every hundred kilogrammes, an impost which being assessed by weight, falls heavily on that class of goods which are the great staple of England, and amounts to about *six shillings*

* De l'Industrie en Belgique, vol. 2, p. 384.

upon a piece of the value of *fourteen*. Nor is this all—their market is systematically beset by smugglers across the frontiers of France and Holland, who, inundating it with French and English goods, exempt from duty, have reduced the price of Belgian production to an ebb utterly incompatible with any hope of remuneration. This is an evil, however, to which not their peculiar branch alone, but every protected manufacture in the country is equally liable, and for redress of which they have vainly invoked the interference of their legislature—the mischief is of too great magnitude to be grappled with or remedied.

The only relief which their government has attempted, has been by the deplorable expedient of themselves supplying capital to sustain the struggle. A manufactory, however, which they undertook to support, at Ardennes-on-the-Meuse, constructed with machinery upon English models, and conducted by English managers, became an utter failure and was abandoned;

and in like manner, an association which they had encouraged to attempt an export trade, after numerous shipments to Portugal, the Mediterranean, the East Indies, South America, and the United States, became utterly insolvent, and involved the government in a loss of 400,000 francs. In the mean time, England and France monopolise the most profitable portions of their trade, the latter supplying them, almost exclusively with the more costly articles of ornament and fancy, and the imports of medium goods from the former having been, in the first six months of the present year, upwards of 17,000 pieces more than in 1839.

This is one illustration, and I regret to say, only one out of many of the ruinous effects of the "Repeal of the Union. "In Ghent, from its peculiar position and the active genius of its population, its results have been felt with more severity than elsewhere, though its influence is discernible, to a greater or less degree, in every quarter of Belgium. The

merchants of Ghent, however, make no secret of their dissatisfaction, and exclaim boldly against the indifference or incompetence of the ministry to adopt measures for their redress. In an especial degree, their dissatisfaction manifests itself against the present minister of the interior, M. Liedtz, who having been a lawyer, is presumed to be imperfectly acquainted with commerce, and is said to be as unjustly partial to agriculture, as he is coldly indifferent to trade. One gentleman complained bitterly that having, some time since, accompanied a deputation to an interview with the minister on the subject of the decline of the cotton trade, M. Liedtz abruptly ended the conference, almost before they had opened their grievances, by exclaiming:—" Come, now we have heard enough about cotton—how are your cows?"

In Ghent, business has always been conducted, not only upon an extended scale, but upon the most solid and steady basis; bank accommodation and discounts are un-

known, in fact, in Belgium, and a bill, if drawn at all, is, as a general rule, held over to maturity, and collected by the drawer. This may, in a great degree, account for the trifling balances which suffice to produce a suspension of business. In an annual document, published officially, I presume, I perceive that although the number of failures in Ghent for the year 1839, amounted to twenty, the amount of their united deficiencies did not exceed 198,000 francs.*

* *Exposé de la situation de la Province de la Flandre Orientale, pour l'année* 1840. *Ghent de l'imprimerie de Vanryckegem-Hovaerz, imprimeur du Gouvernement Provincial.*

The numbers are as follows:

Two	whose deficiency is	between	1,000	ff. and	2,000.
Four	,,	,,	2,000	,,	3,000.
One	,,	,,	3,000	,,	4,000.
One	,,	,,	6,000	,,	7,000.
Two	,,	,,	7,000	,,	8,000.
One	,,	,,	14,000	,,	15,000.
One	,,	,,	19,000	,,	20,000.
One	,,	,,	20,000	,,	25,000.
Three	,,	,,	25,000	,,	30,000.
One	,,	,,	35,000	,,	40,000.
Two	,,	,,	unknown		

The sufferings of Ghent seem to be so generally admitted, and so unequivocally ascribed to the operation of the revolution, that no scruple or delicacy is observed by the press or the public in ascribing them to its proper cause. A curious illustration of this, we observed in a volume entitled, "*Le Guide Indispensable du Voyageur sur les Chemins de Fer de la Belgique,*" sold at all the stations on the government railway, and in the case in which I bought my copy, by persons in the government uniform. In a short notice of Ghent, it contains the following passage of plain speaking upon this point. "During the fifteen years of the Dutch connexion, the population, the wealth and the prosperity of Ghent never ceased to increase; manufactures were multiplied, streets enlarged, public buildings erected, and large and beautiful houses constructed; in short, Ghent had become a great commercial city. *The revolution of* 1830 *at once arrested this career of improvement, and Ghent, whose prosperity was the offspring of peace and of her connexion with*

Holland, now seems to protest, by her silence, against a change which she finds to be fraught to her with ruin. The citadel was only taken when all hope had disappeared of maintaining the supremacy of King William; but," adds the author, "it is to be hoped that, little by little, the influence of new institutions may rally the hopes of the Gantois, and, at last, reconcile them to the consequences of the Belgian revolution."* And the new institution which is to achieve such a triumph, is to be, of course, *the railroad* from Ostend to Cologne.

Our stay at Ghent had been somewhat longer than our original intention, but we found it a place abounding in attractions, not only from its hereditary associations, but from the enterprising and ingenious character of its inhabitants, and the progress which they have achieved in their multifarious pursuits. Besides, it is always a matter of the deepest interest to observe the success or failure of a great national

* Le Guide Indispensable, p. 103.

experiment, such as is now in process in Belgium, where, after an interval of upwards of two centuries, during which they have formed a portion of another empire, its inhabitants are testing the practicability of restoring and supporting their old national independence, notwithstanding all the changes which two hundred years have produced in the policy, the commerce, and the manufacturing power of Europe—changes not less astonishing than those which, almost within the same interval, the discovery of printing has produced in the diffusion of learning, or that of gunpowder in the system of ancient warfare.

CHAPTER V.

BRUSSELS.

The railroad—Confusion at Malines—Country between Ghent and Dendermonde—*Vilvorde—The palace of Laeken*—First view of Brussels—The Grand Place in the old town—The Hôtel de Ville and Maison Communale—The new town—The churches of Brussels—*The carved oak pulpits of the Netherlands*—ST. GUDULE monuments—Statue of Count F. Merode—Geefs, the sculptor—Notre Dame de la Chapelle—*The museum*—Palais de l'Industrie—The gallery of paintings—THE LIBRARY—Its history—*Remarkable MSS.*—Curiosities in the museum of antiquities—Private collections—Rue Montagne de la Cour—The theatre—Historical associations with the Hôtel de Ville—Counts Egmont and Horn—The civil commotions of

Philip II—*The fountains of Brussels*—The Cracheur—*The mannekin*, his memoirs—Fountain of Lord Aylesbury — Dubos' restaurant — The hotels of Brussels—Secret to find the cheapest hotels in travelling.

We again availed ourselves of the railroad from Ghent to Brussels, starting from the Monk's Meadow at eight o'clock in the morning, and made the journey in about three hours and a half. The route is considerably increased in length, owing to the line making an angle in order to traverse Malines, which has been made a centre at which every branch of the entire system converges and take a fresh departure. This arrangement may be a convenience to the directory, but it is an annoyance to the public, not only by the extension of the distance they have to travel, but by the scene of bustle, confusion, and risk created by the concourse of so many trains at the same point, the nuisance and danger of which can hardly be ex-

aggerated; engines bellowing, horns sounding, luggage moving, and crowds rushing to secure their places in the departing train, or to escape from being run over by the one coming in.

The aspect of the country was, in all directions, the same—tame, but rich and luxuriant, with vessels toiling along its tributary canals, and here and there the Scheldt making its tortuous windings through long lines of pines and alders. One thing strikes a stranger as singular in this province, the almost total absence of pasture land, and the appearance of no cattle whatsoever in the fields, the ground being found to be more valuable under cultivation, and cattle more economically fed within doors. The railroad passes by some pretty but unimportant villages, such as Wetteren and Audeghem, before arriving at Termonde, more familiarly known to us as the Dendermonde of my Uncle Toby's military commentaries. At Audeghem, a road turns to the right to

Alost, one of the most flourishing towns of East Flanders, and a prosperous seat of the flax and linen trade.

After passing Dendermonde, we entered the province of Brabant, at the little village of Hombech, and the train, after traversing Lehendael (the Valley of Lillies), stopped at Mechlin, whose towers had been visible long before reaching the station. One of the most conspicuous objects here, is an immense brick building, erected in 1837 or 38, for the purpose of spinning linen yarn, but never having been applied by its proprietors to that purpose, has lately been purchased by an English gentleman, Mr. Fairburne, to be converted into a manufactory of machinery, a department of manufacture which, in the present state of of Belgium, I much fear is not likely to prove more encouraging.

From Malines to Brussels, the distance is fifteen miles, and was performed in something less than half an hour, the road lying through broad meadows and more extensive pastures than any I have yet seen in Belgium. On the left, these plains swell into a gentle

hill of some miles in length, on which the towers and steeples of Brussels are discernible long before we approach them. Within a few miles of Malines, we passed Vilvorde, an ancient place, but now only remarkable for its vast prisons, which are seen at a considerable distance. It was at Vilvorde that Tindal, the first translator of the Bible into English, was burned for heresy in 1536.

Before arriving at the termination of the journey, the road sweeps along between two gentle elevations, that on the left being covered with the villas and pleasure-grounds of Schaerbeek, the Hampstead of Brussels, and to the right, with the woods and palace of Schoenberg, near the village of Laeken, a favourite residence of King Leopold. It was built in 1782, by the Archduke Albert, for the sister of the unhappy Marie Antoinette, and to serve for the future residence of the Austrian governor of the Netherlands. It suffered during the saturnalia of the French revolution, when a lofty tower, which rose above the woods

that surround it, was torn down and sold for the price of the materials. Napoleon was partial to the palace as a summer retreat, and it was whilst lingering here with Marie Louise, that he completed the final and fatal arrangements for the invasion of Russia. It is handsomely, rather than magnificently furnished, but the grounds and gardens, which have all been re-modelled in the English style, are amongst the most beautiful in Europe, and command extensive views of the broad wooded campagne of Brabant, and the cheerful heights and gothic towers of Brussels.

The first sight of Brussels, on approaching it from the side of Malines, is well calculated to give a favourable impression of its beauty and extent, the long planted line of the Allée Vert, terminating at the handsome gate d'Anvers, (formerly the Porte Guillaume, before the change of dynasty), with its dark iron balustrade and gilded capitals, and in front, the steep acclivity covered with streets and buildings of the modern and more elegant town, whilst the turrets

of the Hôtel de Ville and the towers of St. Gudule are equally conspicuous, rising above the roofs of the ancient city which nestles at its base. The city itself, though of remote antiquity, has nothing very antique in its first appearance, and, in fact, it is only in the narrow alleys and passages of the lower quarter that the mansions and municipal buildings of the former nobles and burghers of Brabant are to be discerned. Even here there are fewer architectural traces of the magnificence of the middle ages than in almost any other of the great cities of Belgium. The Grand Place is a splendid exception to this observation, as it is surrounded on all sides with lofty old Spanish-looking houses, in the style, at least, if not of the date of the palmy days of Brabant, its high peaked roofs bristling with tiers of little grim windows, its pointed gables covered with bas-reliefs and carvings, and the ample fronts of its mansions richly decorated with arabesques in stone, which had once been gaudily coloured, and here and there tipped with gold.

On one side starts up to a surprising height the gothic tower of the Hôtel de Ville, by far the most beautiful in the Low Countries, and on the opposite one is a vast gloomy-looking building, now converted into shops, which was once the *Maison Communale* of the city; and being rebuilt by the Infanta Isabella, in the early part of the seventeenth century, was, in commemoration of the deliverance of Brussels from the plague, dedicated to Notre Dame de la Paix, with an inscription, which is still legible, though much defaced: "*A peste, fame et bello libera nos Maria pacis.*"

It is in the narrow and dingy passages of this lower town, that a stranger feels all the associations of the olden time around him; but on ascending by the steep and precipitous streets to the modern quarter, with its light and beautiful houses, its open squares and gardens, with their fountains and statues, and all that is French and fashionable, the charm of association is gone, and one feels something like coming suddenly into the daylight from the dim scenery of a

melodrame. To the stranger in Brussels there are, therefore, two distinct sets of objects of attraction. In the new town there are the palaces of the King and the nobles, the park, the public promenades, the chambers of the Senate and the Commons, the splendid hotels of the Place Royal, and the libraries and museums that occupy the château which was once the residence of the Austrian viceroys ; whilst in the old town, there are the churches of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with their superb oak carvings, stained windows and statuary, the Hôtel de Ville, the gloomy old mansions of the past race of nobles, and all the characteristic memorials of the ancient capital. The first are speedily disposed of by the tourist, as there is nothing unique in any of the lions of Brussels, its inhabitants are, in fact, anxious to have their city considered a miniature Paris, and it seems to have been laid out altogether on the model of the French capital, with its boulevards and its palace gardens, its opera,

its restaurants and its "café des milles colonnes."

The churches, are, as usual, splendid specimens of gorgeous altars, (with their ponderous candelabra and Madonnas in embroidered petticoats,) solemn aisles, marble columns, painted ceilings, Flemish pictures and carved pulpits, so flowing and graceful in their execution, that they look as if the Van Hools and Van Bruggens of former times, possessed some secret for fusing the knotted oak and pouring it into moulds to form their statues and their wreathes of flowers. Their Pulpits are, in reality, one of the wonders of the Netherlands, they are of immense dimensions, some of them reaching almost as high as the gothic arches which separate the nave from the side aisles. The lower department usually represents some appropriate scene from the events of sacred history, the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, Elijah fed by ravens, the conversion of St. Paul, with the frightened horse most vigorously intro-

duced, or Christ calling Peter and Andrew, who are represented in their boat by the sea-shore, with their nets and fish, all exquisite specimens of the art; and, occasionally, the designs are allegorical, with figures of Time, Truth and Christianity. Above these, usually rises a rock, or a mass of foliage and flowers, on which are perched birds and other accompaniments, and on this rests the shell of the pulpit, the whole is then surmounted, either by a canopy sustained by angels and cherubims, or by the spreading branches of a palm tree, so arranged as to over-shadow the whole. Almost every great church and cathedral in Belgium contains one of these unique productions of an art which is now almost extinct, or, at least, possessed of no practitioners at all qualified to cope in excellence with these ancient masters. The confessionals, altars and organs are likewise elaborately covered with these almost unique decorations, and even the doors and windows sometimes exhibit specimens of extraordinary beauty and value.

The *church of St. Gudule*, which is the most remarkable at Brussels; has two huge gothic towers, each nearly the same height with St. Pauls, and from their solid and massy construction looking even more stupendous; but the effect is seriously injured by a number of ordinary houses, which have been permitted to be erected against the very walls of the building!—a curious instance of the absence of all taste in the ecclesiastical body, who can thus permit, for money, the actual defacement of their finest building. The pillars which sustain the roof within, bear each in front a colossal statue, of which there are fourteen or sixteen representing the various saints and apostles, some of them by Duquesnoy and Quellyn, but the generality of inferior merit. The pulpit was carved by Van Bruggen in 1699, and was presented to the cathedral by the Empress Maria Theresa.

The windows which are of dimensions proportioned to the huge scale of the church are all of rich stained glass, partly antique and partly of modern execution, but of great

brilliancy of tint and high talent in design. The high altar is so composed by some ingenious machinery within, that the sacred wafer descends apparently of itself, at the moment when the host is about to be elevated by the officiating priest.

Around the choir are the monuments of some of the ancient Dukes of Brabant, surmounted by their effigies in armour, with swords and helmets disposed by their side; that of John II, who married Margaret of England, and died in 1318, bears a figure of the Belgic lion in gilded bronze, which weighs nearly three tons. Opposite this is another to the memory of the Archduke Ernest of Austria, on which rests a figure clad in mail. Close by it a marble slab in the floor covers the vault in which are interred some members of the imperial family who died during their vice-royalty at Brussels.

One statue in St. Gudule is remarkable as a favourable specimen of modern art in Belgium, it is that of the Count Frederick de Merode, a young nobleman of most

amiable personal character, whose father was of one of the ancient families of Brabant, and his mother a Grammont. On the outburst of the revolution in 1830, he returned from France, where he was residing, enrolled himself as a volunteer in a corps of sharpshooters raised by the Marquis de Chasteler, and was killed whilst leading a charge against the Dutch rear-guard, under the command of Duke Bernard of Saxe Weimar. This monument is by Geefs of Brussels, who has evinced equal judgment and ability in retaining the national blouse as the costume of his statue, and yet so disposing it as to render it perfectly classical by his arrangement. Geefs is by far the most distinguished artist, as a sculptor, in Belgium, and has recently erected a spirited statue of General Belliard in the Park overlooking the Rue Royale, and the grand monument over the remains of the revolutionary partisans, who fell in the three glorious days "of 1830," and are interred in the centre of the *Place des Martyrs*.

The other churches of Brussels contain little that is worth a visit. In that of Notre Dame de la Chapelle, there is a high altar from a design by Rubens, one of those works in which he has so profusely exhibited his astonishing command of arabesque and allegorical devices. The pulpit is another specimen of wood carving, representing Elijah fed by ravens. It is remarkable that in all the churches of Brussels, there is not a single painting of more than common place ability, nor a single specimen of either Vandyck or Rubens—painters, it would seem, like prophets, are to seek for their patrons at some distance from home.

The municipal collections of art are deposited in the museum and picture gallery in the Palais des Beaux Arts, formerly the vice-regal residence of the Austrian governors. In one wing of the building, called the Palais d'Industrie, are deposited models of machinery, agricultural instruments, and inventions of all kinds applicable to manufactures. The collection is

costly and extensive, and cannot fail to exercise a beneficial influence in the education of mechanics. The main galleries of the palace are filled with the national pictures, which amount to between three and four hundred. The description of a painting is scarcely more intelligible or satisfactory than the description of an overture. Amongst the collection are a few of considerable merit, but the vast majority are of the most ordinary description. There are a few by Rubens and Vandyck, not of the first order, some by Breughel, Cuyp, Gerard Dow, and the chiefs of that school; a multitude by the Crayers and Van Oorts and Vander Weydes, whose works one meets in every Flemish chapel, and a number of the early painters of the Netherlands, in which, I confess, I am not connoisseur enough to discover anything very attractive beyond their antiquity and curiosity as specimens of the feeble efforts of art in its infancy.

Under the same roof is the magnificent Library, begun by the Dukes of Burgundy so far back as the fourteenth century, and

enriched by every subsequent sovereign of the Netherlands, till its treasures now amount to 150,000 volumes of printed books and 15,000 manuscripts; amongst which are numbers whose pedigree through their various possessors is full of historical interest, and some which belonged to the library of Philip the Hardy, in 1404, and described in the "*Inventoire des livres et roumans de feu Monseigneur (Philip le Hardi), a qui Dieu pardonne, que maistre Richart le Conte, barbier de feu le dict Seigneur, a euzen garde.*" Its chief treasures it owes, however, to Philip the Good, the Lorenzo de Medicis of the Low Countries, who attracted to his court such geniuses as Oliver de la March, Monstrelet, Philip de Commines, the chroniclers and men of learning of his time, and kept constantly in his employment the most able "clerks," "*escripvains*" and illuminators, engaged in the preparation of volumes for his "librarie," and having united all the provinces of the Netherlands under his dominion, he collected at Brussels the

manuscripts of the Counts of Flanders, in addition to his own. The identical copy of the Cyropedia of Xenophon, which he had transcribed for the study of his impetuous son, Charles le Téméraire, and which accompanied him to the disastrous field of Morat, is still amongst the deposits in this superb collection.

Another of its illustrious founders was Margaret of Austria, *la gente demoiselle*, daughter to the gentle-spirited Mary of Burgundy, and friend of Erasmus and Cornelius Agrippa, who amassed for it the invaluable collection of "*Princeps*" editions, which were then issuing from the early press of Venice and the North. The Library still contains the common-place book of this interesting Princess, with her verses in her own handwriting, and music of her own composition.

Another equally charming guardian of literature was her niece, Mary of Austria, the sister of Charles V and Queen Dowager of Hungary, who transferred to the library of Brussels the manuscripts which her hus-

band, Louis II, had inherited from his grandfather, Mathias Corvinus. Amongst these, is a missal, one of the wonders of the collection, painted at Florence in 1485, and abounding in the most exquisite miniatures, arabesques and illuminated cyphers. From the period of its deposit in Brussels, the Dukes of Brabant took their oath of inauguration by kissing the leaves of this priceless volume, and two pages which had been opened for this purpose at the accession of Albert and Isabella, in November 1599, are spotted with the flakes of snow which fell upon the book during the solemnity.

In the vicissitudes of Brussels, the contents of her Library has always been an object of cupidity for her invaders. In 1746, Marshal Saxe sent a selection of its treasures to Paris, which were restored in 1770, and again seized by the revolutionary army of Dumourier in 1794, and though recovered in 1815, it was with the loss of many of its precious deposits. But even the disappearance of these was less exaspe-

rating than the insensate vandalism of the savants of the revolution, who actually rubbed out with their wetted fingers, the portraits of the ancient emperors and kings, and even of the saints who happened to wear a crown, in order to evince their inexpressible hatred of monarchy.

Amongst the manuscripts, are some few which escaped from the sack of Constantinople in 1453, and bear the names and handwriting of Chalcondylas, Chrysolaras, and the restorers of Grecian literature, who, on the overturn of the Eastern Empire, found a refuge at Rome and at the court of the Medicis. The bindings of numbers of them, bear the imperial cypher of Napoleon, but the majority have still their ancient velvet covers, the richness of which, with their clasps of gilded silver which secure them, attest the value which was placed upon their contents by their illustrious owners.

An adjoining apartment is devoted to some interesting antiquities, among which, are a court-dress of Charles II, a souvenir of his sojourn at Brussels during the as-

cendancy of Cromwell; a cloak of feathers, which belonged to Montezuma; the cradle in which Charles V. was rocked; and two stuffed horses which bore Albert and Isabella at the battle of Nieuport, one an Andalusian barb which had accompanied the Infanta from Spain, the other a Moravian which afterwards saved the life of the Archduke at the siege of Ostend in 1604.

In the private mansions of Brussels there are numerous collections of pictures and objects of vertu, much more valuable than those which are the property of the nation. Those of the Duke d'Aremberg, the Prince de Ligne, M. Maleck de Werthenfels, and the Count Vilain XIV, contain several masterpieces of the Dutch and Flemish masters, and some few by Raphael Leonardo de Vinci, and the chiefs of the Italian school. The name of this latter gentleman is somewhat remarkable; his ancestor, who was ennobled by Louis XIV, being permitted to append the cypher of the monarch to his name and that of his descendants. The collection of the Duke d'Aremberg,

besides a number of paintings of great excellence, contains a remarkable marble, which has excited much curious investigation amongst the dilettanti ; it is a head, the fragment of a statue, which *is said* to have originally belonged to the main figure in the group of the Laocoon in the Vatican, the present head being only a restoration. The truth of this is questioned, but the connoisseurs attached to Napoleon were so satisfied of its truth, that the Emperor, by their advice, offered the possessor, weight for weight, gold for marble, if he would allow the head to resume its ancient position on the shoulders of the statue which was then in the gallery of the Louvre. The Duke, unwilling to part with it, declined, but aware of the determined nature of Napoleon's caprices, sent it privately out of the country, and had it concealed at Dresden till the fall of the Emperor, when it was restored to its old place in the library of the Palais d'Aremberg. That the head of the central figure in the group of the Vatican is a restoration, there can be no doubt ;

it was copied, it is said, from an antique gem. The head at Brussels, was found by some Venetian explorers, and sold to the father or grandfather of the present Duke d'Aremberg. Whether it be the genuine original or not, no possible doubt can be entertained of its masterly execution, and the vigour and fire of expression with which it glows, justify any opinion in favour of its origin.

An almost precipitous street, appropriately called "Rue Montagne de la Cour," rises in a straight line from the lowest level of the ancient town to the hill on which the new one is situated, which is filled with the best and most showy shops in Brussels; jewellers, printsellers, confectioners and modistes, and crowded at all hours of the day with carriages and fashionable loungers. At the bottom of this steep acclivity, is the Place de la Monnaie, where stands the theatre, in which the actual insurrection commenced in 1830, when the audience, inflamed by the music and declamation of the Muette de Portici, and

inspired by the estrô of Masaniello, rushed into the street and proceeded at once to demolish the residence of the minister, M. van Maanen. Turning a corner from this, one finds himself suddenly in the midst of the antique square in which stands the Hôtel de Ville, and the other principal municipal edifices of the past age—the *forum* of ancient Brabant, as the Place de Monnaie is of the modern. It was in this and in the sombre old mansions that are to be found in the precincts around it, that the pride of democracy appears to have delighted in "recording in lofty stone" its own magnificence, and lavished their public wealth upon the towers of the Town Hall, the most imposing monument of the popular power.

But, independently of its democratic associations, the Hôtel de Ville of Brussels was the scene of the most extraordinary episode that has ever been recorded in the chronicles of kings;—it was in the grand hall of the Hôtel de Ville that Charles V. wearied with the crown of a monarch, laid

it aside to assume the cowl of a monk, and took his departure from the throne of an empire to die, a maniac, in the cell of a monastery. It was from one of the windows of the same building that the ferocious Duke of Alva looked on, in person, at the execution of two of the purest patriots of their own or any subsequent age—Lamoral, Count Egmont, and Philip de Montmorency, Count Horn—the first and most illustrious martyrs of the Reformation in the Netherlands. During the reign of terror under Philip II., Brussels was the grand scene of Alva's atrocities and of his successors' incapacity. It was in the little square of the Petit Sablon, that the protestant confederates assembled to draw up their famous remonstrance to Margaret of Parma, the sister and vice-queen of the bigotted tyrant, on the occasion of presenting which, by the hands of de Bredérode, the unlucky exclamation of "the beggars," *(Gueux)* escaped from the incautious lips of the Count de Berlayment, in whispering his counsel to the grand-duchess to reject their prayer,

a word which fell like a blister, and was adopted, at once, as the title and the sting of the protestant conjuration.

The square of the Hôtel de Ville was the scene of every popular commotion that has agitated Brabant, from the origin of the ducal dynasty, to the halcyon days of Albert and Isabella: it resounded with the insane riots of the Iconoclasts in 1566, and it was illuminated by the flames of the Inquisition, in which the same infuriated fanatics made a final expiation for their violence. It ran red with the blood of the protestants under Philip II.; and, in 1581, it rang with the acclamations of the followers of the Prince of Orange over the temporary abolition of the worship of Rome. So little is its architectural aspect altered since these thrilling scenes, that, with the Hôtel de Ville on one side, and on the other the old communal house, in which Egmont and Horn spent the night previous to their execution; and around them the venerable gothic fronts and fretted gables of its ancient dwellings, one might

almost imagine it the ready scenery, and half expect the appearance of the dramatis personæ to re-enact the tragedy.

The ornamental monuments of Brussels are neither very numerous, nor remarkable for their refinement of taste. The public fountain called "le Cracheur," is the statue of a man, with his arms folded, and vomiting the stream for the accommodation of the public; and the famous little fountain of the *mannekin*, in the Rue de Chene, supplies her customers with water in a style perfectly unique, at least, in a statue. This eccentric little absurdity is the darling of the bourgeoisie, and the popular palladium of Brussels, and its memoirs are amongst the most ridiculous records of national trifling. The original which was of great antiquity, made of carved stone was replaced by one of iron. The present one is in bronze on the same model, and was cast by Duquesnoy in 1648. One story to account for its extreme popularity, is that it is a likeness of Godfrey, one of the Dukes of Brabant, who, when an infant, having

escaped from his nurse, was discovered at the spot in the attitude immortalized by the little statue. By the mob, the mannekin is perfectly worshipped—he is called "le plus ancien bourgeois de la ville," has the freedom of the city, and a feast day in July regularly appointed in his honour. On this occasion, he is clothed in a suit which was given him by Louis XV., consisting of a cocked hat and feathers, a sword and costume complete, the King, at the same time, creating him a Chevalier de St. Louis. Charles V. was equally beneficent to the mannekin, and Maximilian of Bavaria assigned him a valet-de-chambre. He has also been left legacies by more than one of the citizens; at the present moment his income is upwards of four hundred francs, paid to his valet for his services upon state occasions, and to a treasurer for the management of his estates. Brussels has, more than once, been thrown into dismay by the mannekin being carried off, and the utmost exertion has been made for his recovery. The last violence offered to him was his

being carried off a few years since; but he was discovered in the house of a liberated felon, and speedily restored to his old place and functions amidst the delight of the Brussellois.

In the Place du Grand Sablon, another fountain, surmounted by a marble statue of Minerva, between figures, representing Fame and the river Scheldt, and holding a medallion with the heads of Francis I. and Maria Theresa was erected, as its inscription imports in 1711, by Thomas Bruce, Earl of Aylesbury, in recognition of the enjoyments he had experienced during a residence of forty years in Brussels.

We dined to day with the gentlemen who formed the Commission of Inquiry which had lately visited the linen districts of Great Britain. The entertainment was at du Bos', Rue Fossé-aux-Loups, the favourite restaurant of Brussels, and the dinner was altogether French, and equal to the best cuisine of the Palais Royale. The hotels of Brussels, those, I mean, in its upper town, are on an immense scale, especially the

Bellevue, which overlooks the park, and was in the very focus of the fight during the "glorious three days" of 1830. Beside it is the Hôtel de Flandres, said to have the most recherché table-d'hôte of the entire, and such is its popularity, that we could neither obtain apartments in the hotel on our arrival, nor seats at the table on a subsequent occasion. In this dilemma, we took up our residence at a house on the opposite side of the same square, the Hôtel Brittanique, where we found the arrangements as execrable, in every respect, as the charges were monstrous. As usual, however, a stranger with his foot on the step of his carriage, has no resource but to submit; but, as a general rule, the traveller who is in search of the *cheapest* hotel, should invariably address himself to that which has the reputation of being the *best;* where there is no temptation, as in the less frequented establishments, to make those who visit the house pay for the loss occasioned by the absence of those who avoid it, and

where, even if the bill be occasionally something more than is equitable, he has, at least, the satisfaction of feeling that he has had *comfort* in exchange for extortion.

CHAPTER VI.

BRUSSELS.

EFFECTS OF THE REPEAL OF THE UNION WITH HOLLAND.

The Belgian revolution has produced no man of leading genius —The present ministry—M. Rogier—M. Liedtz, the Minister of the Interior—An interview at the Home Office—Project of steam navigation between Belgium and the United States—Freedom of political discussion in Belgium—*Character of King Leopold*—Public feeling in Brussels—The original union of Holland and Belgium apparently desirable—Commercial obstacles—Obstinacy of the King of Holland—Anecdote of the King of Prussia—The extraordinary care of the King for manufactures—*Prosperous* condition of Belgium under Holland—*Les Griefs Belges*—Singular coincidence between the proceedings of THE REPEALERS IN IRELAND AND THE REPEALERS IN BELGIUM—Ambition for separate nationality—Imposition of the Dutch language unwise—Abolition of trial by jury—Now disliked by the Belgians themselves—Financial grievances—Inequality of representation—CONDUCT OF THE ROMAN CATHOLICS—Hatred of toleration —Attachment of the clergy to Austria—*Remarkable mani-*

festo of the clergy to the Congress of Vienna—Resistance to liberty of conscience, and freedom of the press—Demand for tithes—Resistance of the priests to the toleration of Protestants—The official oath—*Protest of the Roman Catholic Bishops against freedom of opinion and education by the State*—Perfect impartiality of the Sovereign—Resistance of the priesthood—*The Revolution*—Union of the Liberals and Roman Catholics—Intolerant ambition of the clergy—Separation of the *Clerico-liberal party*—Present state of parties in the legislature—Unconstitutional ascendancy of the priests—*State of public feeling*—Universal disaffection—Curious list of candidates for the crown of Belgium in 1831—"*La Belgique de Leopold,*" its treasonable publications — Future prospects uncertain — Vain attempts to remedy the evils of the revolution—*Connexion with the Prussian League refused* — Impossibility of an union with Austria or Prussia—Union with France impracticable—Partition of Belgium with the surrounding states—*Possible restoration of the House of Nassau, in the event of any fresh disturbance.*

We this morning paid a visit to M. Liedtz, the minister of the interior, in his hotel at the "Palais de la Nation." It is rather remarkable that neither the actual eruption of the revolution nor its subsequent influence, has been sufficient to draw forth any individual of leading genius, to give a complexion to the policy of the new

state. The actors who have played the most prominent *rôle* during the last ten years have been a few of the ancient Catholic noblesse, whose titles gave éclat to the movement, but who have long since withdrawn into retirement, or ceased to take a lead in the administration—and the body of lawyers whose professional aptitude to promote or profit by any change, has enabled them to step over the heads of their less adroit, but not less qualified associates, and to appropriate to themselves the "loaves and fishes" of office. Lastly, there were "the masses" whose impetuosity achieved the revolution, the "patrioterie" who form the tools of every revolution to be worked for the benefit of their more clear sighted superiors. But the daring spirits of 1830 have all disappeared; the present times do not require such fiery agents; the violence which effects a revolution, must be the first thing to be got rid of by those who would perpetuate it, and who speedily learn to exchange the exciting demand of "*delenda est Carthago*,"

for the milder supplication of "*panem et Circenses.*" In this way the Masaniello of the revolution, M. de Potter, having been given to comprehend that his services had been rendered, and his presence no longer desirable, has long since withdrawn himself to ponder over, and, it is even added, *to regret* the events of 1830; but certainly to lament, in strong terms, his disappointment at their practical results.

The present ministry did not, from all we could observe, command the confidence of their fellow citizens, nor do I recollect any one of them spoken of without a reference to some incapacity or disqualification for the office. M. Rogier, the minister of public works, had been a third or fourth rate barrister at Liege, and eked out an insufficient professional income by delivering lectures on French literature. His daring and energetic share in the events which displaced the old dynasty, recommended him to employment under the new, but the office assigned to him, that of the interior, involving the guardianship of trade

and manufactures, was one for which he was little suited, either by education or taste, and he utterly destroyed the confidence of the merchants and mill owners, by avowing in one of his addresses to them, that they must be prepared to see "*commerce die a lingering death,*" if it were conducive to the permanence of the new order of things. M. Liedtz, with whom we had an interview this morning, had, like M. Rogier, been a lawyer, but of some standing and eminence in his profession. He had been, we heard, unfavourable to the revolution at its first out-break, but his talents speedily recommended him to the notice of the new authorities, who promoted him to be judge in the district of Antwerp, whence he was transferred to his present office on the removal of M. Rogier, to that of public works. He received us in a suite of very elegant apartments, much superior to those with which our own ministers are accommodated in Downing Street. He is a native of Audenarde, of humble parentage, but of considerable practical acquire-

ments, especially on agricultural matters. He received us most affably, and after some conversation on commercial subjects, reverted at once to his own hobby, by asking after the progress of agriculture in Great Britain. The object of greatest interest with us was the duty which it had been announced that it was in contemplation by the government to impose upon the export of flax, and to which I have before alluded as the extraordinary expedient suggested by the agricultural members of the chambers, in order to protect the hand spinners from being superseded by machinery. The minister seemed fully to understand the absurdity of the suggestion, but still admitted that the "pressure from without" might compel him to introduce a bill upon the subject. He informed us, that a negociation has just been concluded with some speculators in the United States, supported by the Belgian government, with a view to running a line of steam-packets of great power from New York and Philadelphia to Antwerp and Ostend, touching at one of the southern ports of England, and thus it was expected

securing a share of the passenger trade, as well as opening, by degrees, a market for Belgian produce in the United States.

One thing, in Belgium, I cannot but allude to as characteristic—the unrestrained freedom with which every individual discusses politics, and the unreserved candour and frankness with which each details his views and strictures. This is the more remarkable, because the universal tenor of opinion is, if not directly to complain, at least, to admit the existence of much cause for complaint. I never met with less *bigotted* politicians, and I have not seen a single individual, whom I would designate *a party-man*, in the English acceptation of the term, that is one who finds all right, or all wrong, precisely as the party with whom he sympathises be censured or lauded by the inference. But the fact is, there are no "optimists" in Belgium as yet, and there is so much that is unsatisfactory in every department, that the consciousness of it forces itself upon the conviction, if not the admission of every individual. The press,

too, is equally unreserved, and in the shops of the booksellers, we found numbers of publications devoted to the exposure of the present condition of the country.

Still no creature, not even the most violent partisan of the House of Nassau whom I have met with, includes King Leopold in the scope of his censures. The revolution itself, its immediate agents and its consequences are the objects of their condemnation; but no one of the results from which they suffer, is ascribed to the influence or interference of the King. Those who regret the expulsion of the King of Holland, look upon King Leopold merely as his involuntary successor, and whilst they condemn the incapacity of his ministers, and the violence of the party in the house and in the country by whom they are controlled—all seemed to regard the King as only borne upon a tide of circumstances, which he is equally unable with them to resist or direct. His fondness for locomotion, his frequent visits to England and journeys to Paris, were the

subject of good humoured badinage, and have procured him the titles of "*le roi voyageur*," and "*l'estafette nomade*." "Il s'amuse," said an intelligent Belgian, when I asked him what share the King took in politics, "he goes out of the way to Wiesbaden, and leaves things very much to themselves, or, what is nearly the same thing *to his ministers*."

In Brussels, of course, we found the revolution still popular; its population were the first to promote, and are the last to regret it. But it is an inland town, the residence of the court and the nobles, unconnected either with manufactures or commerce, and its shopkeepers have not suffered by the change, which has affected the prosperity of the trading districts. Equally independent of the loom and the sail, they only hear of the embarrassments of others, as a sound from a distance. Their intercourse is with the wealthy, who are congregated round the seat of the legislation and the palace of the sovereign; as yet their pursuits have not been affected

by the diminished resources of the middle and labouring classes, and besides the constant passage of strangers, as well as the permanent residence of some thousands of English and other wealthy foreigners, is a permanent source of income. But, throughout the country and in the provincial towns, we met with but one feeling of keen discontent with the result of the revolution, and alarm for the condition and prospects of the country.

That the union of Belgium with Holland in 1815 was one conceived, less with an eye to the interests of the two countries, than in an anxiety for the erection of a substantial power in that precise locality, as a security for the peace of Europe, is admitted by all engaged in its actual arrangements; but it is equally admitted, that whatever discordances there might have existed at the time between the feelings, the peculiarities and the interests of the two states, they presented no permanent obstacle to that "complete and intimate fusion" of the two people, which was ultimately anticipated

by the Congress of Vienna. It was in order to erect the new kingdom into a state of adequate importance, that England, in addition to concurring in the restoration of the ancient Netherlands of Charles V, divested herself of a portion of her colonial conquests during the war to re-annex them to Holland, thus feeding the national resources of both sections of the new alliance—the Belgian by an outlet for its manufactures, and the Dutch by a carrying trade for their shipping.

The union, too, was a natural one, not only geographically, but intrinsically. Belgium had been compelled to become a manufacturing country by the closing of the Scheldt, at the treaty of Munster which ended the Thirty years' war in 1648, one of those unnatural acts of state policy, that seems almost an impious interference with the benevolence of providence; and which by annihilating this noble river for all purposes of trade, had the contemplated effect of driving commerce to Amsterdam and Rotterdam, thus constraining the Belgians to betake themselves to industry and handicrafts at

home. With such elasticity did they conform to this necessity, that when the unnatural embargo was taken off by the progress of the French in 1794, the energies and genius of the population had made such a decided development, that they were not to be seduced back into their old pursuits of traffic, and the *manufactures* of Belgium continued to prosper under "the continental system" of Napoleon, down to the period of the general peace. Holland, on the contrary, with her hands fully employed by her shipping and her trade, and possessing no mines of iron or coal, had never either the inducement or the temptation to become a manufacturing country, so that nothing could apparently be more happy, than the union of one producing nation all alive with machinery, with its neighbour proportionably rich in shipping; and to open to both an extensive colonial territory, whose population the merchantmen of the one could supply with the produce of the other.

But even here lay the seeds of unforeseen dissentions. Belgium, all whose notions of

commercial policy were formed upon the false and narrow basis of France, was perpetually calling for protective duties, bounties and prohibitions, without which her artisans were sinking under the effects of foreign competition; whilst to the Dutch, with their spirit of traffic and fleets of shipping, every restriction upon absolute free trade was a positive interception of gain. This antagonism of interests led to perpetual animosity in the states-general upon all questions of customs and imposts, and to such an extent did Holland give way upon these points, in order to protect the interests of Belgium at the sacrifice of her own, that a well informed author observes that, "*even supposing the desire for separation had not arisen in Belgium, the Dutch, ere long, would have been forced to call for this divorce in order to save Amsterdam and Rotterdam from ruin.*" It is more likely, however, that the march of manufacturing prosperity in Belgium, and the increased demand and consumption of her produce would have ultimately compen-

sated her commercial colleague for all intermediate loss.*

* The Belgian manufacturers themselves were, as I have before stated, perfectly alive to the mischief which the separation from Holland was certain to entail upon them; and it is curious, as well as interesting, to remark the circumstantial fidelity with which these protectors warned the movement party of the consequences which they were provoking, and which have since been accomplished to the letter. The following reasons against separation from Holland were published at the time in one of the journals of Antwerp, when the prospect of Repealing the Union was most unpalatable:

"Ever since some parts of our southern provinces have unfurled the banner of insurrection, all business has ceased. Circulation has been interrupted, and several establishments, which required the employment of great capital and afforded the means of subsistance to numerous families, have been destroyed and burned. Public tranquillity disturbed in every manner; men, the most peaceable, and a short time ago, happy in the bosom of their families, prospering under the protection of order and the laws, now forcibly torn from their homes to perform military service of which they are ignorant, and which they dislike; their property every day exposed and ready to become the prey of an unbridled populace—a state of anarchy which will end by creating parties who will shortly lacerate each other; and lastly, a most forbidding future preparing for them. Such is a faint picture of the evils which a rebellious and unconstitutional rising has already produced. But all that has hitherto been witnessed is in no wise to be compared to the consequences which must result from an un-

But added to these pecuniary squabbles, there were deeper and less tangible causes

seasonable separation, which has been demanded with a levity which no man of sense can comprehend.

"It is true, that among the men who figure as the authors and supporters of a separation, there are to be observed no manufacturers: and, indeed, what manufacturer, what merchant, what agriculturist even, could fall into such an error?

"You cry out for a separation, and would fain persuade yourselves that it would be all in your favour. With similar levity you take upon yourselves to dictate the conditions of a separation. This shows but little foresight.

"The northern part of the kingdom has taken up the gauntlet, which you so imprudently threw down. Hear one of their organs, and consider the consequences which must, and ought to ensue to Belgium when once isolated and abandoned to itself.

The following is the reply of the Dutch to your challenge:—

"'We are glad,' say they, 'that the proposal for a divorce has been made by you. Let it take place, and the cloud which has darkened the horizon of our country will be dissipated. A glorious sun will then soon shine upon it. Soon will the decadence of Amsterdam and its causes cease, and the separation will give it the life and activity which it lost by the union.

"'But let us examine what will be the result of this divorce to the northern provinces?

"'Relieved from an odious manufacturing system, we

of mutual repulsion, differences of language and religion, and local prejudices and an-

shall be able to establish our customs on a perfectly commercial system: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Dort, Middleburgh, will become so many free ports, into which moderate duties, exempt from vexatious modes of collection, will bring back our old commerce in all its force. The duties at present imposed upon sugar, coffee, and other articles of trade, will be revoked.

"'The inhabitants will purchase fuel, clothing, stuffs, and all the commodities which trade, manufacture, and the necessities of a people require, in England, and wherever they can produce them upon better terms than in the southern provinces, where all these articles will be loaded with duties and restrictions, and will be therefore dearer.

"Our country will again become the centre and mart of all the productions and riches of the world which are destined for and consumed in Germany and the provinces of France bordering on the Rhine, as well as in many other places which now escape us.

"'The products of our colonies will be no longer carried except to our own ports, to the exclusion of all others, and they will be freed from all the duties and charges with which they are at present burdened, and which our Sovereign has established for the advantage of the Belgians alone. Thus not only the mother country, but the colonies, also, will enjoy the advantage of the separation. The duty of 25 per cent. established at Java in favour of the Belgians will be abolished, and it is thus that, wherever the standard of Holland shall be displayed, liberty, prosperity, and public

tipathies, out of which speedily sprung an infinity of definite "grievances," which timely and conciliating interference and constitutional reforms might have allayed; but which, there can be no doubt, were obstinately and fatally neglected by the King of Holland, and his irresponsible ministers; and though it is absurd to regard them, even if unredressed, as justifiable grounds for revolution, they led ultimately to the expulsion of the family of Nassau from the Netherlands.

It seems to be admitted upon all hands, that in this the King of Holland was seriously to blame, and that whilst the political causes of complaint were all capable of easy removal or redress, they were overlooked in his anxiety to stimulate and promote the commercial prosperity of the country. From the outset, he aimed at eradicating the French institutions, to which, during the twenty years of their connexion with that country, the Belgians

happiness will prevail; and let no one present to you as a burdensome set-off the debt which will remain to our charge.' "

had become strongly attached, and to assimilate them to the model of Holland. His conduct, in this attempt, was strongly contrasted with the prudence of the King of Prussia, who having received his Transrhenan provinces under precisely similar circumstances, had never once attempted to interfere with those habits and local constitutions to which the people had become familiarised. He even ventured to remonstrate with the King of Holland on the impolicy of his course, and to warn him of the discontents it was likely to engender, but received only a pettish reply that, "his Majesty was old enough to act for himself,"—a rebuff which the Prussian monarch is said to have retorted when, at a subsequent period, the King of Holland applied to him for assistance to reconquer Belgium, and he accompanied his refusal with a remark, that he presumed "his Majesty was old enough *to fight* for himself."

This unwise neglect of the political grievances of Belgium, cannot be compensated by the King's exclusive devotion to its

manufacturing and substantial interests; and even in this, it is doubtful whether his zeal did not hurry him into an unwise extreme. His great ambition was to render his people "a nation of shopkeepers," and develop as thoroughly the manufacturing resources of Belgium, as industry and care had matured the agricultural and commercial riches of Holland. There was no labour, no expense, no care, no experiment left unemployed to give life and impulse to their grand object. One engrossing topic was uppermost in his mind; which was not inaptly compared to a "price current," solely influenced by the rise and fall of produce, or the fluctuations of the funds. Tho inventions of Watt and Fulton stood higher in his estimation than the achievements of Frederick or Napoleon. He protected the arts, not so much from admiration as policy, and he countenanced literature, not from any devotion to letters, but because it created a demand for articles of commerce. In short, there was nothing classic, inspiring or chivalrous in his bearing, all was

material, positive and mathematical. Business was his element, his recreation;—and amusement, but a robbery of that time which he thought he ought to devote entirely to his people. He loved to surround himself with practical men, and he gained the good will of all the great commercial and financial aristocracy by the attention he paid to them, individually and collectively. It is incontestible, that if the happiness and welfare of a nation had depended on the laborious exertions and unremitting devotion of the sovereign to commercial affairs, then Belgium ought to have been as contented as it was prosperous, and its sovereign the most popular monarch in Europe.*

Under the auspices of such a sovereign, Belgium, during the fifteen years of its connexion with Holland, attained a height of prosperity which no human being presumes to question. Agriculture, recovering from the sad effects of war, and receiving an

* White, v. i, p. 124, &c.

augmented impulse from the demand created by the commerce of Holland, speedily attained the highest possible point of prosperity—mines were opened, coal, iron and all other mineral wealth extensively explored; manufactures and machinery were multiplied to an extent beyond belief, and the trade of Antwerp even outstepped that of Holland in exporting the produce of Belgium. Roads, canals and means of communication were constructed with surprising rapidity; sound and practical education was universally diffused, in short, every element of material prosperity became fully developed, and what rendered the progress of the nation the more important, was the fact that it was not intermittent or capricious, but exhibited one steady march in its ascent in each successive year, from the period of the union to the hour of its disruption.*

* A full detail of the state of the kingdom, at the outbreak of the revolution will be found in a volume published by the Baron Keverberg, who had been governor of East

In such a combination of circumstances, one is impatient to discover the specific causes of discontent which could inflame an entire population into all the fury of revolt, and to the expulsion by blood and the sword of a King, under whose sway they acknowledge themselves to be debtors for so many blessings. This is not the place to canvas their merits, but in merely enumerating the principal grievances of which they complain, the "*griefs Belges*," as they were specially headed in the newspapers of the time, it is impossible to avoid being struck with the identity between the vast majority of the pretexts for revolt propounded by the "patrioterie" who Repealed the Union in Belgium, and the "patriots" who clamour for "the Repeal of the Union" in Ireland. Nor did this similarity escape the promoters of the revolution in either country. In Ireland, it has been ostenta-

Flanders under the King of Holland, *Du Royaume des Pays-Bas, sous la rapport de son origine, de son developement, et de sa crise actuelle, Brussels*, 1836.

tiously and perseveringly dwelt upon, and even down to the present hour, the example of the Belgians is paraded as an incentive to the ambition of the enemies of British connexion; and in Belgium, even before the revolution, the position of the two countries, as regarded their several legislative connexions with England and Holland, was the subject of repeated comparisons and condolence. The "Belge," a journal which was active in the encouragement of the movement, thus alludes to the coincidence of their circumstances in 1830. "Belgium has been long the Ireland of Holland, the relation of the dominant power has been in almost every particular, that of "*the Sister Island*" to England—with the intolerable addition, however, that while Ireland has had the less population by far, Belgium had by far the greater—that Belgium paid much more than her proportion of the taxes, whilst Ireland paid much less—that Ireland often sent her inhabitants to share in the distribution of places, pensions and honours, whilst such a distribution amongst

the Belgians was of extremely rare occurrence."

But the similarity consists not less in the ostensible grounds for revolt, than in the identity of the actual instruments and agents. In Belgium, as in Ireland, they were the uneducated and bigotted mob, inflamed by the half-educated press, and led on by a propaganda of priests and a crowd of unsuccessful and hungry lawyers. In both countries, too, the leaders of the movement, whatever may have been their real and secret sentiments, ostensibly professed to seek merely a redress of grievances, and to start with alarm at the idea of *separation;* their only desire being a *federative union* under the same crown, but with a distinct administration. The Belgian, however, soon felt that he wanted a power, which there is but little reason to ascribe to the Irishman of saying "thus far shalt thou go, and no farther," and the stimulants applied to the versatile vanity of the people, soon rendered them impatient of any proposition short of actual indepen-

dence. An unfortunate phrase in the treaty of Paris that Belgium was to be to Holland "as an accession of territory," was construed into a national indignity, notwithstanding the expression of perfect equality and "fusion" which pervaded every other passage of the document, and the cry of "*a nation no longer a province*" became forthwith the aspiration of every discontented coterie. That distinction they have, at length, attained, and enjoy the barren eminence of a throne, but unfortunately without either the power, the wealth, or the influence as an European state, that are essential to give it dignity and stability.

There are, however, some points of marked distinction between the two cases, inasmuch as whilst the Irish sufferers clamour *for* assimilation to England, those in Belgium flew to arms *against* assimilation with Holland; and, besides the Belgian repealer pursued his object of separation notwithstanding the admitted prosperity of his country, whilst the Irish one, less barefaced, tries eagerly to invent a case of distress in

order to justify his treason. Above all, there is this happy difference, that whilst in Belgium the repeal has been achieved at the expense of national prosperity, Ireland has still the opportunity to reflect and to be warned by her lamentable example.

The civil grievances of the revolutionists arose out of certain measures of the King, in some of which he was manifestly wrong; his attempts to render Dutch the national language for all public documents in certain provinces—to abolish trial by jury, which had been established by the French—to remove the supreme court of judicature to the Hague—and to introduce the principles of Dutch law into all their pleas and proceedings. The two latter were the usual vexatious manifestations of the spirit of centralization, which a prudent government would never have attempted to force upon the unwilling prejudices of a nation; and the substitution of the Dutch tribunal for the trial by jury would have been a substantial injustice, had the people been unanimous, or even, in a considerable proportion, fa-

vourable to it; but in the divisions upon the question in the States General, large bodies of the Belgian representatives were found voting constantly against it; and *even now, notwithstanding its re-establishment, it has become more and more unpopular, and even those who supported it in* 1830, *refuse to sit upon juries themselves, or to uphold the system by their co-operation.* The alteration of the language was an unwise attempt to force upon four millions of Belgians the dialect of three millions of Dutch. This has, however, been sought to be defended by stating, that of the entire population of the united kingdom, one fifth alone spoke French, namely in Hainault, the Waloons, South Brabant, and a part of Luxembourg; and the remainder dialects of German, in the proportion of two fifths Dutch, and two fifths Flemish. The imposing Dutch upon the entire was not, therefore, more unjust than would have been a similar imposition of Flemish, *and yet, within this very year, the party who reviled the one to the death in* 1830, *have begun*

to petition the legislature for the other! They are contented now to abandon French, which they then contended for, and to accept the barbarous patois of Flanders as its substitute, which would be equally unintelligible to the Waloons, and even in those districts of Antwerp which border upon Holland.

Another complaint had reference to the disproportionate distribution of government patronage between the subjects of Holland and Belgium, in which there may have been much truth, and to which the government did not take the most wise nor the most soothing steps to reconcile the minority, by ascribing it to the *dearth of talent* amongst their countrymen. *Like the Irish*, the Belgian agitators protested against the taxes of Belgium being made applicable to the discharge of the national debt, of which the largest proportion had been contracted by Holland before the period of the union—but having by the Revolution secured the management of the national revenues in their own hands, *an evil of more serious*

magnitude has been discovered, in the fact, that the expenditure of Belgium in every year since the Revolution, with the single exception of 1835, *has exceeded the revenue by some millions of francs.* In 1831 and 1832 this was strikingly the case, the expenses of the war and of new establishments leading in the former year to an expenditure of upwards of four millions, and in the latter to eight millions sterling. In

1833	the revenue was	£3,441,519	and	
	the expenditure	3,765,993	excess	£324,474
1834	the revenue was	3,371,182	and	
	the expenditure	3,554,960	excess	183,778
1835	the revenue was	3,695,225	excess	112,852
	the expenditure	3,582,373		
1836	the revenue was	3,382,286	and	
	the expenditure	3,469,031	excess	86,746
1837	the revenue was	3,436,468	and	
	the expenditure	3,817,621	excess	381,153
1838	the revenue was	3,784,253	and	
	the expenditure	3,885,232	excess	100,979
1839	the revenue was	4,163,821	and	
	the expenditure	4,476,613	excess	312,792

The interest upon the national debt of the independent state exceeds at the present moment £800,000 a year. Besides, during the Dutch regime, it appeared that in

Belgium, *as in Ireland*, the malcontents bore the most trifling proportion of the national burthens, the revenue of the three years preceding the revolt being paid in the proportion of sixteen florins per head for every inhabitant of Holland, and only ten for those of the Netherlands.

Another grievance, no less *Irish* than Belgian, was that the number of representatives was not regulated exclusively in proportion to the *population* of the two states, totally irrespective of the relative territory and possessions of each—and although the representation was exactly divided, one half of the States General being Dutch and one half Belgian, a division warranted by the large territorial interests of the former; the patriots and their disturbers complained "*Si l'on nous avait attribué une représentation en rapport avec la population*, NOUS AURIONS DOMINÉ LE NORD."* The frankness of this avowal has not yet

* *Essai historique et critique sur la révolution Belge. Par* M. NOTHCOMB. *Brussels*, 1833.

been imitated by the Repealers of Ireland; but its aspiration is not the less manifest in the similarity of their pretensions; and the frequent references of the Irish agitator in the House of Commons to the relative population and comparative electoral constituencies of the counties of England and Ireland, irrespective of their relative wealth and property, parrotted as they have recently been by members of her Majesty's government, may no doubt be construed into an ill-concealed adoption of the sentiments of the repealers of Belgium.

These, and a few other minor points, were the burthen of all the *civil* grievances against which the oppressed patriots of Belgium had to protest; and it is not difficult to perceive that it required but a little complaisance on the part of the Dutch government to redress them, although it is too late to regret that that redress was not timely applied. It is impossible, however, for any sober minded citizen to discern in the entire mass of these complaints, even in all their aggravation, any adequate ground

for a resort to the last remedy of oppression—war, and revolution; and in vain would the restless promoters of the revolt have laboured to inflame the populace by rhapsodies on the glory of independence, or diatribes against the pronunciation of Dutch,—in vain would they have attempted to sting them into madness by calculations of finance, or lamentations over the exclusion of some provincial orator, from a seat in the legislature or a portfolio in some public bureau,—all these whips and stimulants would have been powerless and unfelt, had not *religion* been introduced in association with each, and the ascendancy of the Roman Catholic church been made the alpha and the omega—the beginning and the end—the burthen of every complaint, and the object of every exhortation.

The avowed cause of the dissatisfaction of the clergy, was that the King *was a protestant*, and that protection and full toleration was extended to all sects and religious communities. The genius and pretensions of the Roman Catholic church

seems, down to the present hour, to have undergone less modification in Belgium than in any other country of Europe, with the single exception, perhaps, of Rome itself. It was to preserve it in all its integrity that Philip II. and the Duke of Alva for thirty years exhausted the blood and treasure of Spain in its defence, and down to the present hour, its clergy exhibit a practical gratitude for their devotion, by the uncompromising assertion of every attribute for which they contended. Belgium is, at this moment, the most thoroughly catholic country in Europe, and the recent exploits of the Archbishop of Cologne attest the power of its example and its influence even over the adjoining states.

Under the dominion of Austria, the authority of the church had been recognized by the crown, in all its plenitude and power, and the subsequent union of Belgium to France in 1795, was eagerly resisted by the clergy, who naturally saw in it the subversion of their power before that of the Goddess of Reason. But even the

influence of twenty years of intimate association with France, proved incapable to diminish the ardent subjection of the Belgians to their priesthood, or temper the ambition of their prelates and their clergy; and when, at length, the clasps which held together the empire of Napoleon, flew asunder in 1814, the utmost desire of the priesthood was to have Belgium again restored to her ancient masters, and *re-constructed as a province of Austria*, in which event, they calculated that the elevation of the church would follow, as of course. This, however, European policy forbade; and when, in 1814, the prelates of Flanders found themselves abandoned by their chosen sovereign, who accepted, in exchange, the more attractive provinces of Italy, and handed them over to one of the most Protestant monarchs in Europe, their consternation was unbounded, and in the extravagance of their disappointment, they had the madness to address a memorial to the Congress of Vienna, which is well worthy of being preserved as an authentic manifesto

of the pretensions of the Roman Catholic church in modern times.*

It bears date in October, 1814, and is signed by the vicars-general of the Prince de Broglie, who was then Bishop of Ghent. It sets out by an exposition of a principle learned, they say, from experience, that it is indispensable for a catholic country passing under the government of a protestant sovereign, to stipulate for the free exercise of its own worship, and for placing all its ancient rights and privileges beyond the reach of any interference of the state (*"hors de toute atteinte de la part du Souverain"*). The religion of Luther, the vicars-general proceeded to remind the Congress, is merely *tolerated* in Germany beside that of Rome, although it is very absurd to approve of two doctrines that contradict each other; but in Belgium, the latter has been distinctly recognized from immemorial time, and they, therefore, feel it is incumbent on them early to demand a

* A copy of this singular document, will be found at the end of these volume.

formal guarantee for its exclusive exercise, "*l'exercice exclusif*," which had been secured to them, at former times, by the most solemn treaties. They warn the Prince of Orange, that he will find it his future interest, as well as that of Europe in general, whose object it must be to have Belgium peaceful and contented, to enter into an inaugural compact with the church, regarding the maintenance of all its ancient authority, and candidly intimate that the result shall never be satisfactory, if their own demands are not complied with in the following particulars:—First, the exclusive establishment of the Roman Catholic religion, *with this exception, that the royal family and the court may have a place of protestant worship in their palaces or chateaus, but that on no pretence whatever, is a protestant church to be erected elsewhere.* The words of this postulate are as distinct as their import is remarkable in the nineteenth centurry:—"Avec cette exception, que le Prince Souverain et son auguste famille seront libres

de professer leur religion, et d'en exercer le culte dans leurs palais, chateaux, et maisons royales, ou les seigneurs de sa cour auront des chapelles et des ministres de leur religion, *sans qu'il soit permis d'eriger des temples hors de l'enceinte de ces palais, sous quelque pretexte que ce soit.*" Secondly, that the church was to have absolute dominion in all matters concerning its own affairs. Thirdly, that the Council of State was to be composed *exclusively of Roman Catholics,* including *two bishops* of the establishment. Fourthly and fifthly, that a nuncio should be received from the Roman See, to treat with the council, and a new concordat obtained with the Pope. Sixthly, *that it was indispensably essential, in order to provide a perpetual maintenance for the clergy beyond all controul of the state, that tithes should be re-established throughout Belgium;* the protestants, of course, contributing to the maintenance of the church from which they dissented! Seventhly, the re-establishment of the university of Louvain; and lastly, the restoration of the *monks and*

religious orders which had been suppressed by the Emperor Joseph II, and "*as one of the most excellent means, and, perhaps, the only one, at the present day, to secure to youth the blessings of an education combining, at once, the principles of genuine religion and the acquirements of human learning, the re-establishment of the jesuits throughout Belgium.**"

Whether this extraordinary document was really framed with a view to influence the deliberations of the Congress, or written with a full anticipation of their ultimate conclusion, and designed only as a defiance and a bold forewarning of the consequence, it had but little weight at Vienna, and the provinces were consigned, without the required stipulations, to the King of Holland.

The constitution of the new state was

* Un des plus excellens moyens, et peut-être le seul qui existe aujourd'hui, d'assurer aux jeunes gens une éducation qui réunit tout à la fois l'esprit de la religion et les talens les plus éminens *serait de rétablie les jesuites* dans la Belgique.—*Memor. art.* 8.

based upon principles of the most unrestricted toleration and protection for all denominations of religion. But toleration and freedom of opinion are the very essence of the reformation, and the Roman Catholic clergy had the discernment to perceive that no more effectual system could have been established for the silent but ultimate subversion of their church, than by reducing it to an equality with every other, thus lending the authority of the state in ascribing to many the possession of that saving faith, which it is fatal to the very spirit of catholicism to have attributed to any but one—and that one, herself. Equal rights and protection were to her more pernicious than proscription and persecution, and no other course was left to her than that precisely which she adopted to protest against toleration in the first instance, and to revolt against it in the end.

By an arrangement of the new government, no public functionary or officer connected with any department of the state,

was to enter upon his functions before having taken an oath to maintain all the principles and observe all the enactments of the Constitution. But as amongst these were comprised the fundamental law of "toleration," another manifesto was instantly issued by the prelates, prohibiting all Roman Catholics from subscribing to the obnoxious oath, as subversive of all the principles of the church of Rome, and ruinous to her attributes and claims!

The articles which they objected to were those which guaranteed to all religious denominations of Christians perfect liberty of conscience, freedom of worship, an equality of civil rights and indiscriminate eligibility to all public employments.* To swear to the observance of such a law, the prelates declared to be neither more nor less than to exact equal protection for error as for truth,—and to countenance the admission to places of honour and trust, without distinction of religion, was merely sanction-

* This singular manifesto will be found in the appendix at the end of these volumes.

ing, by anticipation, measures that might hereafter be taken for permitting the interference of protestants in the affairs of the catholic community. The words of the Constitution established the unlimited exercise of public worship, "unless where it gave rise to any public disturbance," *lorsqu'il a été l'occasion d'un trouble;* "but the bishops protested, that to give a power to the government to interfere under any limitation, was to submit the church to the authority of its enemies; and that *to swear obedience to any constitution which presumed the Catholic Church to be subject to the temporal law was manifestly to subscribe to its humiliation.*"* "To ascribe," they said, "to a sovereign of a different faith, *a right of interference in the regulation of national education* would be to hand over public instruction to the secular power, and would exhibit a shameful betrayal of the dearest

* Jurer d'observer et de maintenir une loi qui *suppose* (!) que l'église catholique est soumise aux lois d'état, c'est manifestment s'exposer a coopérer à l'asservissement de l'église.—*Jugement doctrinal,* (Art. 193, see appendix).

interests of the church. There are other articles of the Constitution," continues the manifesto, "which no true child of the Catholic Church can ever undertake, by a solemn oath, to observe or to support, and *above all others that which establishes* THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS!"

This singular document bore the signatures of the Prince Maurice de Broglie, Bishop of Ghent, Charles Francis Joseph Pisani de la Gaude, Bishop of Namur, François Joseph, Bishop of Tournai, and of J. Forgeur and J. A. Barrett, the Vicars-General of Malines and Liege. I have preserved it and the memorial to the Congress of Vienna, as the most remarkable denunciations against liberty of conscience that modern times have produced, and a singular evidence of how little influence the example, or the intimate association of twenty years with the liberalism of France, was capable of producing on the spirit and genius of the church of Rome.

Its promulgation produced an instant effect upon the weak consciences of the

people, which, for a time, was productive of the utmost embarrassment to the establishment and arrangements of the new government, as individuals were prevented from accepting offices, which were open to them, from a dread of the vengeance of the altar. Its mischievous consequences were, however, after a time, defeated by the temperate conduct of the Prince de Mean, the last Prince Bishop of Liege, and subsequently Bishop of Malines, who had not signed the document, and who took the requisite oath, *subject to approval of the Pope*, an example which was speedily followed by all whom the incentive of office inspired with a natural anxiety to avail themselves of so high an authority.

The King now administered the law with an apparent oblivion of every previous act of the Roman Catholic clergy. The income which was appropriated by the state for their support, was *augmented* at his suggestion, the remotest interference with their worship was in no solitary instance attempted, and churches were built for their

accommodation in the poorer districts, to which his Majesty himself was a liberal contributor. For some years every pretext for special complaint was successfully avoided, and the country was too rapidly prosperous to be yet ripe for any efforts to excite abstract discontent. But, at length, about 1825, the striking results of the Dutch system of National Education, to which I have referred in a former chapter, were so apparent, that the spread of intelligence and instruction became too alarming to permit the church to be longer quiescent, and resistance was at once commenced, notwithstanding the fact, that the religious education in the primary schools was scrupulously reserved for the superintendence of the priests, and theology was utterly excluded from the courses of the universities, and handed over exclusively to the college of Louvain. But education, even under these limitations, must be instantly suppressed, or unreservedly submitted to the church, without any controul from the ministry of the interior. Some

concessions upon this point served only to give confidence to the boldness of further demands, and when these were resisted, every other grievance, civil and religious, having in the mean time undergone the necessary process of aggravation and distortion to ripen the passions of the "patrioterie" for revolt, the mine was considered ready for explosion, "and the whole country," to use the words of Baron Keverberg,* "resounded with the cry of the priests, who filled Europe with their denunciations of resentment. To listen to them, one would imagine that the Catholic Church in the Netherlands groaned in the chains of an unrelenting oppression, and that the King had sworn to tear the faith of their fathers from the hearts of his subjects, and to hesitate at no measure, however furious or tyrannical, to "protestantize their country." It is unnecessary to say that these were not only pure fabrications, "mere rhetorical artifices," to serve the

* Page 193.

purpose of the hour, since even their authors now admit this to be the fact. In a recent publication of the journal of Bruges, which is devoted to the *liberal* party, it avows that William I. so far from being the "protestant tyrant which it was then expedient to represent him, was the most tolerant of princes, 'le plus tolerant que l'on puisse s'imaginer,' and only hated by the priesthood because he would not endure them to *place the altar upon the throne itself*, as they have succeeded in doing by the revolution of 1830."

With this imperfect *aperçu* of the origin of the Belgian revolution, it is easy to collect its objects, its agents, and its effects. The union of the Liberals, with the priesthood and their followers, who formed the preponderating mass of the population, formed an alliance so powerful, that the whole strength of Holland was unequal to withstand it, much less the small body of reflecting and loyal subjects, who still remained faithful to the union and the crown, and who were not only overwhelmed by the

violence of the commotion at the moment, but so utterly discomfited by its ultimate consequences, that they have never since been able to rally as a party. But the immediate object being once achieved, the union of the "*clerico-liberal*" confederacy did not long survive its consummation. The "compact alliance" between the priests and the liberals had been sought by the former only to effect a definite purpose, which could not otherwise be attained, *the Repeal of the Union;* and no sooner was this accomplished, than the intolerant ambition of the clergy, put an end to all further co-operation between them. The party of the priests had then become all powerful by their numbers, and no longer requiring the assistance of their former allies, they boldly attempted their own objects independently, and in defiance of them. It is rather a ludicrous illustration of their zeal and its aim, that among the crowd of aspirants who were named for the crown of Belgium in 1831, the *Pope* himself was put in nomination! and had the decision

remained with the revolutionists, there can be no doubt that the Netherlands would have been added to the territory of the Holy See.* Before twelve months from the expulsion of the King of Holland, the body by whom it was effected was split into two contending factions, and, at the present hour, the two opposing parties who contest every measure in the legislation of Belgium, are the quondam allies of the revolution,—the Liberals, and the "*parti prêtre*," the latter of whom have the decided majority, and rule their former associates with a rod of iron.

Every thing, in fact, is regulated by the wishes of that numerous body of the priesthood, who from their ardent exertions for

* The list of candidates suggested for the throne of Belgium in 1831, contains some names which are rather extraordinary, such as Colonel Murat, La Fayette, Colonel Fabvier the Philhellene, Sebastiani, Châteaubriand, Prince Carignan of Piedmont, M. Rogier, Count de Merode, the present King of Greece, Prince John of Saxony, the Duke of Leuchtenberg, son to Eugene Beauharnais, Louis Philippe, and the Duke de Nemours, who was actually chosen, but declined the honour.

ascendancy, have obtained the title of the *La Mennaisiens*, and whose influence in every family and in every parish, rules, regulates and determines every political movement. They, it is who conduct all the elections, name the candidates, and marshal the constituency to the poll, and when I was at Ghent, the curate of Bottelaer, a rural district in the vicinity, read from the altar the persons for whom the congregation were to vote, at a pending contest, on pain of the displeasure of the Bishop. If the coincidence does not strike irresistibly every individual, who has attended to what is passing in Belgium, it is here again unnecessary to point out the parallel, between the composition of the two parties, in that country and Ireland, who sympathise in the principle of repeal and separation. In each country the majority of the "movement" is composed of the Roman Catholic clergy, and the devotees of the church, but in both their strength would be ineffectual, and certainly their object suspected, had they not been joined

by honest but mistaken individuals, who, aiming at Utopian theories in politics, have been content to employ for their accomplishment, the aid of those, whose designs are more essentially sectarian, than civil or political.

In Belgium, however, the demonstration has been made, of what may be expected to ensue, should the project of Repealing the Union be ever successfully effected in Ireland. There, as in Flanders and Brabant, the priests and their followers would have the overwhelming majority; and caution or concealment being no longer essential, the triumph of their attempt, would be but the signal for discarding their allies, and proceeding boldly to the consummation of their own ambition. The union once repealed, the objects of the liberal protestants of Ireland and the Roman Catholic party, would be as distinct as the very spirit of freedom, and the genius of despotism could render them. The manifesto of the Roman Catholic prelates to the Congress of Vienna, and their protest against *Liberty of Conscience, Education,*

and *the Freedom of the Press* in Belgium, made, not at any remote or antiquated era of history, *but within the last ten years*, sufficiently attest the animus in which their admirers and imitators would set about the regeneration of Ireland. The Archbishop of Malines would find a cotemporary and congenial spirit in the benignant prelate of Tuam, the pastoral superintendance of the clergy would be as vigorous in the elections for a domestic, as for a "Saxon" legislature, and as successful in securing a majority in the parliament of Dublin, as in the "Palace of the Nation," and the services of the patriots who now shout in the train of the Agitator, could be as readily dispensed with in Ireland, as they have been summarily discarded in Belgium.

Were the union between the two countries once repealed, the union between the two sections, by whose co-operation direct or indirect it had been effected, would not survive it one single year—the influence of the protestant and English party in Ireland, would in such a conjuncture be as effect-

ually annihilated, as had been the adherents of Holland, in Belgium; and the deluded liberals, by whose unwise assistance they had been overwhelmed, would find themselves in the position of the moderate section of the chambers of Brussels, the consciencious, but inefficient opponents of a despotism, more formidable than that they had overthrown, inasmuch as the tyranny of the million exceeds the tyranny of the individual, and infinitely more galling, inasmuch as they had themselves contributed unwillingly to impose it upon their country.

In such a state of things, it is easy to imagine the discontent and disunion, which pervades every department of Belgium; its trade and manufactures, labouring under wants and pressures, which the government have not the power, however anxious their inclination, to relieve; the civil grievances for the abatement of which the revolution was undertaken, only partially redressed, and in some instances, exchanged for others, the immediate offspring of the remedy itself, — and to crown all, the

government and the country submitted to a religious ascendancy, which is as unwisely exercised by the party who have attained to it, as it is suspected and disliked by their opponents, who smart under its caprices and suffer from its indiscretion.

Even the very last act of the revolution, and that which might be regarded as placing the seal to the European bond, for its permanency, namely the ratification of the final treaty for the partition with Holland last year, seems to have only added to the existing insecurity; the leaders of 1830, loudly protesting against the assignment to Holland of these portions of Luxembourg and Limbourg, which have been decreed to her, and the mercantile interests, uniting in complaints, that the government of King Leopold, have been outwitted by the ministers of the Hague, and have not only submitted to surrender 350,000 of their already reduced population of consumers to Holland, but have ceded to her demands, which will inflict injury upon the navigation of the Meuse and the Scheldt.

I can state from my own observation, that I have not conversed on the subject with a single individual in Belgium, who expressed himself thoroughly satisfied with the present posture of affairs. On the contrary, I have found every where irritated dissatisfaction, and if not open regret for the events of 1830, and distinct wishes for a reunion with Holland, the utmost perplexity to discover some yet untried expedient, which would hold out a hope of restoring the country to its tranquil prosperity, whether as an independent nation, or in incorporation with some other state. *On all hands, it seemed to be felt that for things to go on as at present is impossible,* this was the constant theme of conversation in society, and the pamphlets and brochures which I picked up in the shops, are filled with discussions of the same subject, but in terms much more acrimonious and exciting.

One of these, which I found selling at Ghent, entitled "*La Belgique de Leopold, par un voyageur Français,*" and which

though strongly in favour of Holland, is evidently written by a person well informed on the state of Belgium, thus speaks of the present state of feeling in that country; and the publicity with which pamphlets of this kind are exposed for sale, and their circulation are evidences of an extensive sympathy with the author's views. "The Belgians," the author says, "of all classes, representatives and constituencies, rich and poor, long for the arrival of the moment, which is to disembarrass them from an imaginary nationality, a delusive freedom and an independence, whose very name has become a jest —but they want as yet the energy which is essential to hasten their relief. It is possible, that in the little circle, whose life and fortunes are dependent upon Leopold, there may be some who flatter themselves with the hope that the ratification of the treaty of 1839, is the consolidation and establishment of his power * * But the vast body of the nation less involved in the immediate question of the revolution, are

far from regarding the present peaceful position as one of long duration, although guaranteed to the new state in the name of the same powerful courts, which by treaties not less solemn and sage had conferred the crown upon the former dynasty from whose brows, it had been rudely torn by the revolution * * * At this moment, the prolonged existence of Belgium, as an independent state, is a matter of impossibility, its manufactures, its commerce and its prosperity are annihilated, and it is crushed to the earth under the pressure of its debt and taxes. Without ships, colonies or commerce, and encumbered by an army, which never fights, and fortresses destined for demolition, it is merely the jibe and the laughing stock of Europe * * * The very authors of the revolt of 1830, blush for their own handiwork, and those who were then the most zealous apostles of revolution, now preach only contrition and repentance. The defection is universal—and above all the army,—the army, exposed every day to the most cutting sarcasms,

vents its indignation in menaces and murmurs. Every class of the population, including those who would have been perfectly contented with the present order of things, were the circumstances of the country at all tolerable; the whole nation, in short, except the fraction of a fraction, without numbers, wealth nor weight, unite in aspiration for the return of the House of Orange; and the restoration of the kingdom of 1815, is in every heart and on every tongue * * Belgium, has herself, no other alternative left to her, and if from predilection and choice she does not invoke the return of a race of princes enlightened, paternal, courageous and brave, she must speedily be reduced by famine, to implore the restoration, as her only relief from evils of the last extremity. Their restoration may be regarded, at this moment, as morally accomplished, the universal voice of the nation has decreed it, and it requires but an accident, an excuse, a name, a banner, and the existence of the revolutionary

kingdom is terminated without another 'protocol.' "*

Under these circumstances, the position of King Leopold must be any thing but an easy one, if his ambition extends to the foundation of a royal dynasty for his descendants. The religious grievances of the nation are, it is too much to be feared, beyond his reach to correct, and the evils which beset and endanger its internal prosperity, arising out of the circumscribed resources of the nation, must look in vain to them for redress. The fundamental defect is the want of an adequate consumption for the produce of the national industry, and for this the ingenuity of the government has been ineffectually tortured to discover a remedy. It is idle to look to Germany or England for *commercial treaties* which would afford an opening for Belgian manufactures in competition with their own; important concessions have been made to France, by the reduction of duties upon her produce,

* La Belgique, No. 1, p. 13, 16, 20, 23, 24, 27; and No. 2, p. 49.

when imported into Belgium, but no reciprocal advantages have been obtained in return; on the contrary, ever since 1815, when the Netherlands were taken from her, to be given to Holland, she has exhibited a waspish impatience to embarrass and undermine her prosperity. *Prospects of colonization* have been discussed and even proposals made to other states for permission to attempt settlements on their distant territory—and where these have failed, commercial expeditions have been dispatched to Algiers, to Egypt, to Brasil, to Bolivia and Peru, all with a view to open a trading intercourse with the natives, but each and all have proved hopelessly unsuccessful.

The manufacturers of Ghent and Verviers, have thus turned their eyes towards the Zoll-Verein, and year after year attempts have been made to effect a connexion, if not a formal juncture with the Prussian Commercial League; but here again disappointment alone awaited them,

for independently of the fact, that by the constitution of the Zoll-Verein, it is accessible only to those of German blood (on which score Luxembourg might have been admissible), it was manifestly hostile to the very spirit of the league, whose object is to protect their own native manufacturers, to admit amongst them a formidable rival, who would inundate them with her produce, and could take nothing from them in return.

But if the necessities and weakness of Belgium, render it impracticable for her to continue as she is, and if national independence be irreconcilable with her prosperity, the question which occupies the thoughts of her discontented subjects, is to what quarter she shall turn for relief from without. To attach herself again to Austria, as before the French revolution, is a matter impracticable and could be productive of no advantage, even if it were otherwise. The condition of the Rhenish provinces, under the dominion of Prussia, would make her

eager for a similar incorporation, but this the interests of Europe, as well as those of Prussia herself forbid.

An union with France would be equally hopeless and incompatible with the policy of the Congress of Vienna, and would, with the exception of the districts immediately bordering on the French frontier, be in the highest degree distasteful to the population at large. Their annexation to the territory of France in 1794, had been resisted by the clergy, and its termination in 1814 was hailed with rapturous impatience by all classes. Their condition under the empire had been one "of the most insignificant vassalage. Their religious institutions destroyed, their cherished privileges annihilated, and all their rights and immunities for which they had been contending for centuries before, trodden under foot."* Even their commerce and manufactures were jeopardied by the jealous rivalry of their new allies, their clergy debased, and their youth drafted off by conscription to

* White, vol. i. p. 23.

feed the slaughter of Europe. The recollection of this has left no vigorous desire for a return to fraternization with France, nor would France herself, however important Belgium might be as a political acquisition, consult the interest of her native manufactures by imparting an equality in all her advantages to competitors so formidable. Still so impatient are the Belgians to fly from the "ills they have," that at the present moment, whilst the possibility of war between France and the rest of Europe occupies the attention of all the world, I was repeatedly assured in Belgium that it would only require France to give the signal, and a powerful section of the people would declare in her favour. So conscious are all parties of this, that the bare probability of war in Europe is looked to with the utmost alarm by the government, and the *Controleur*, an appropriately named journal, the organ of the clerical party, was anxiously busied, whilst I was in Ghent, in decrying any idea of a re-union with France, declaring in one

of its publications early in September: "Et comme nous n'avons pas pour habitude de cacher notre manière de voir, nous dirons rondement, *que nous serions plutôt Hollandais que Français.*—En dépit de M. Rogier."

Another suggestion has been the *partition* of Belgium between the surrounding states, but to this equally insurmountable obstacles present themselves. Antwerp and the districts on the Dutch frontier, if assigned to Holland, would have no longer employment for their capital and ships, and would again sink under the more favoured rivalry of Amsterdam and Rotterdam; and as Hainault and the fortresses along the Meuse and the Sambre would necessarily fall to the lot of France, a measure so menacing to the future security of Europe, would not be tolerated by her courts, unless these strongholds were garrisoned by the allies, an expedient which would be equally opposed by the pride and ambition of the French.

If the further experience should unfortunately decide finally against the permanence of Belgium as an independent nation, the only practical expedient which remains, and that which has already received the sanction of all the great powers of Europe, would be a return to the disposition made by the Congress of Vienna, and the reincorporation of Holland and Belgium, to form again the united kingdom of the Netherlands. Personal aversion to King William would no longer oppose a barrier to such an arrangement, as his dominion has passed into other hands, and the Prince of Orange, the present king at all times enjoyed the popular affections, if not the national confidence of the people. Should any fresh convulsion arise, which for the sake of the peace of Europe, not less than for that of King Leopold, it is most earnestly to be hoped may be yet averted, all I have either seen or been able to learn from those best informed upon the matter, leaves little doubt in my mind, that the almost unanimous

wish of the people, should they be compelled to change their present dynasty, would point to the restoration of the House of Nassau.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY SCHULZE AND CO., 13, POLAND STREET.

00086127

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 10 March, 2016